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ONTOLOGY, OTHERNESS AND CRITICAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Ontology, Otherness and Critical Religious Education

By
SUNGWOO BAEK

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Abstract

This thesis is a philosophical, theological and educational exploration of the theme of *ontology and otherness*. It is intended to provide a theoretical ground for the possibility of Christian religious education in Christian schools, with particularly reference to school religious education in South Korea. For this purpose it investigates a philosophical ground of education, particularly religious education, in terms of *ontology and otherness*. The recent ontological turn in both education and religious education shows that they take critical realism (CR henceforth) as the pivotal philosophical ground. In reception of this approach the thesis argues, after reading of the originator of CR, Roy Bhaskar, that there is a characteristic feature in the philosophy, viz. the *agential centred form of explanation* of reality which results in the production of a lacuna of the dimension of *otherness* in CR. In response to the problem, the thesis attempt to integrate the dimension of otherness into CR through the exploration of Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy of otherness which provides an account of *the non-agential moment and ethical subjectivity* as what that fills the lacuna and the point of the integration with CR, and incorporate Bhaskarian dialectical agent with ethical subjectivity. However, in doing so, it is revealed that there is a radical diverting point between Bhaskar's notion of alethia and otherness which makes a prominent difference in accounting of ultimate reality as shown between Bhaskar's meta-Reality and Christian understanding of Trinitarian God. Drawing from the philosophical and theological account of ontology and otherness, the thesis finally attends Wright's approach from the frame of otology and otherness, and argues for the use of Wright's approach for the possibility of paving a way for Christian religious education in Christian schools.

Acknowledgement

To submit the thesis, for me, is not only to complete the Ph.D course at King's College London but also to make an ending mark of a particular time of 14 years in U.K. It was a long journey that I and my wife did not expect at first when we planned to come to the country. However, such a long time of stay in U.K became a great opportunity for us in many senses; having good friends internationally, enriching cultural experience, deepening educational and theological understanding and matured in personal faith etc. Nevertheless, it was also a time of patient and endurance under the limited circumstance, financially, emotionally and culturally as a foreigner. In all these days, I have to admit, the Lord has been my shepherd who knows me better than me. **Andrew Wright**, my supervisor, was a great teacher and sincere friend with professional advice, personal support and deep understanding of his student. I could not forget conversations, academically and personally, I had with him. I also want to express my deep gratitude for the support of **Young-Nak Presbyterian Church** in South Korea and **CWM (Centre for World Mission)**, without their support the study at KCL was not able from the first. For all other names in mind to whom I wish to express my thanks I will do so in other ways. However, I should not miss two names to mention here. My mother, **Jin-Lan Son**, her life-long prayer for his last child has been never forgotten neither by the Lord nor by myself. And **Jin-Ah Jung**, my wife, perhaps, the only person, I should acknowledge, who made great sacrifice that made possible of the completion of the study. Without her support and sacrifice, even continued in the time of her struggle of breast cancer, I could not have come this far of this journey.

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Introduction

The thesis is a philosophical, theological and educational exploration of the theme of *ontology and otherness*. The aim of the thesis is to provide a theoretical ground for the possibility of Christian religious education in Christian schools, with particularly reference to school religious education in South Korea.¹

Why does Christian religious education matter? In Korea, Christian education practice has been negatively influenced by structural ambiguity and contradictions. This is represented particularly in two features of the state of religious education in the Korean school system.

Two features indicating structural ambiguity and contradictions in school religious education in Korea

Firstly, according to a report from the Parliament Inspection of Governmental Offices in 2004, out of 1,170 state-maintained high schools,² known simply as ‘public schools’, only one chose *Religion*³ as part of its curriculum, while out of 236 religious high schools, categorized among the 954 ‘private schools’, 114 adopted *Religion* (Byoung-chul Ko, 2005).⁴ It is particularly striking that although *Religion* is a national curriculum subject, available for all types of secondary school on the

¹ In this thesis religious education will mean school religious education; the country of South Korea will be referred to simply as Korea.

² In Korea, the secondary school system comprises two stages, Middle School and High School, catering for pupils aged 13-15 years and 16-18 years, respectively.

³ *Religion* is the official name of school religious education in the National Curriculum of Korea.

⁴ See <Table 1> in the Appendix for the number of religious schools that offered *Religion* in their school curriculum in 2004.

condition of a double-selective regulation⁵ since the beginning of the 4th National Curriculum in 1982,⁶ only one public school is reported as having offered the subject.

Secondly, there is a significant discrepancy between the statutory model syllabus of *Religion* provided by the Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE), and the actual syllabi used in the classes of *Religion* in religious schools. This can be seen in the textbooks provided by religious denominations for their religious schools.⁷ The most obvious discrepancy between the model syllabus and these textbooks is in the weight given to section VIII, on Tradition and Thought of a Particular Religion. This section is designed to allow religious schools to focus on their particular religion, while other sections are devoted to learning about religion in general and world religions. Although the model syllabus does not specify the exact proportion for each section, as there are eight sections this would presumably be one eighth of the total. However, the actual textbooks devote around half of their total content solely to section VIII, as marked by the grey-shadow in <Table 3>. This implies that there is a significant difference in focus or tendency between the model syllabus and the actual school curriculum. Whereas the model syllabus gives attention to religion in general and world religions, the actual curriculum in religious schools, as evidenced by their textbooks, is much more committed to each school's own religion, while meeting the requirement of the statutory syllabus only formally, by containing the other specified sections (Gui-sung Kim 2006).

The above two features indicate the existence of ambiguity and contradictions in doing school religious education in Korea. In fact, the conflict between the two approaches (between

⁵ When schools choose to include *Religion* in the curriculum, it is offered as an Optional Course. Then, in order not to violate the religious freedom of pupils, the school is required to provide an alternative class from other Liberal Arts subjects categorised as Optional Courses in the National Curriculum. In 2004 these subjects included Chinese Characters and Classics, Chinese Classical Literature, Military Training, Philosophy, Logic, Psychology, Education, Life Economy, Ecology and Environment, and Future Career and Occupation (KEDI 2004).

⁶ Since 1945, South Korea has had a system of National Curriculum covering primary and secondary schooling. It has been developed through the following stages: the Syllabi-Period (1945-1953), the 1st National Curriculum (1954-1962), the 2nd National Curriculum (1963-1973), the 3rd National Curriculum (1974-1981), the 4th National Curriculum (1982-1988), the 5th National Curriculum (1989-1994), the 6th National Curriculum (1995-2001), the 7th National Curriculum (2002-2007) and the Revision of the 7th National Curriculum (2008-).

⁷ See, <Table 2> in the Appendix for the statutory model syllabus of *Religion* for the 7th National Curriculum (2002-2007), and <Table 3> for a comparison of the statutory syllabus with the actual textbooks of *Religion*.

general studies of religion and denominational approach to religion) has also produced ambiguity in the practice of *Religion* (Gui-sung Kim 2005; Byoung-chul Ko 2005; Chul-joo Kim and Byoung-chul Ko 2003; Chin-hong Chung 2001). How has this come about? An historical review can provide an answer.

A historical review of the development of *Religion*

The history of *Religion* in Korea since 1945 shows three distinct stages in terms of its relation with the national curriculum: indifference, elimination and ambiguity (ambiguous legitimacy).⁸

The first stage of indifference was evidenced by the non-intervention from the state. During the period between 1945 and 1967 school religious education was not regarded as part of the formal curriculum. On the base of the constitutional principle of the separation between state and church, the national curriculum did not include religious education. However, religious schools were able to keep school religious education in a strongly denominational form, as a kind of extra curriculum.⁹ This was possible because the country was in desperate need of educational expansion as a crucial means of national reconstruction during and after the Korean War; private schools, particularly religious schools, were established with tacit approval to offer religious education in denominational character. Thus, although school religious education was not a part of the national curriculum, the state did not intervene in the school religious education.

The second stage of relationship between the school religious education and the national curriculum was *elimination*. The period between 1967 and 1981 brought upon a series of significant changes to the formal education-system. In order to tackle the excessive competition for entrance

⁸ School religious education existed in different forms even before 1945, dating back to the Open Period of the country in the late 19th century, when religious schools first appeared at the very beginning of the modern educational movement (San-jin Park 2007; Sung-whan Cha 1995; Young-hee Jung 1999). However, the thesis is concerned with the period after the introduction of the National Curriculum system appeared in 1945 under the US Military Regime which came after the independence from Japanese annexation in 1945.

⁹ At that time the title of the subject was set by each religious denomination, for example 'Bible' for Christian schools.

to highly ranked secondary schools, two educational acts were introduced: the Non-Examination Entrance to Middle School Act in 1967 and the Standardisation Act in 1974, which implemented the 3rd National Curriculum (KEDI 2008). The latter Act had a direct effect on religious high schools because the 3rd National Curriculum prohibited all kinds of religious activities in all schools (Byoung-chul Ko 2005). The Act also changed the administration system of entrance to High School from one of selection by school based on an individual application, to one of allocation of pupils to a local school. This was implemented regardless of the religious or non-religious background of pupils or private schools. Since tensions and conflicts in regard to religion had already arisen after the implementation of the Non-Examination Entrance to Middle School Act in 1967 (Chul-joo Kim and Byoung-chul Ko 2003), the implementation of the Standardisation Act and the prohibition of all religious activities in schools under the 3rd National Curriculum was intended to avoid similar problem (San-Jin Park 2007; PCK 2000). School religious education became a scapegoat, since the elimination of the subject was not made from any educational consideration or any evaluation of its educational value, but simply to avoid the contentious side effects of the Standardisation Act.

The third stage of relationship, was that of ambiguity, began with the implementation of the 4th National Curriculum in 1982, and continues today. The elimination of religious education and all other religious activities immediately raised fierce objections among religious schools and their related religious orders, particularly those in Christian circles (PCK 2000), which finally led to a reversal of the policy on religious education. But the Standardisation Act has become solidly established in the educational context, and has caused significant changes to private schools: schools are no longer entitled to select pupils according to the school ethos, and must accept the pupils allocated to them on the condition of financial support from the state, which has reached more than 40% of their total budget (Joo-ho Lee 2006). Hence, they have become quasi public schools (state-maintained) under the Act (Sang-jin Park 2007) and as such are required to be accountable for the *publicness* of the education they offer in the same way as public schools, while at the same time they have a certain degree of autonomy to pursue their own school ethos

according to the Private Educational Law (Byoung-chul Ko 2005). Thus the relationship between the demand for publicness of education and the entitlement of autonomy of private schools has become a contentious issue, and produced fierce debates in Korea, particularly in regard to *Religion*. On the one hand religious schools has been entrusted with pupils from all kinds of religious or non-religious backgrounds, and asked to be accountable for publicness of education for all pupils; on the other hand however, as private, religious ethos schools, they have also been entitled to maintain their foundational ideals, mostly religious (inspired) ideals or ethos. In practice it has been hard to maintain both together, particularly in the religious education classroom. This difficulty has often been expressed as an identity crisis of religious schools (Sang-jin Park 2007; Joseph Kim 2007; PCK 2000), and when applied to religious education it has produced ambiguity.

Ambiguity of *Religion* has become so significant a social issue that it has received scholarly attention, particularly after the inclusion of *Religion* as a national curriculum subject in the 4th National Curriculum (1982-1988). It is no coincidence that a number of groups and academic journals in the field of religious education in South Korea began to emerge from the time of the implementation of the statutory syllabus. Sohn and Kim's research shows that four major journals, actively dealing with school religious education, have been published since 1995: *Korean Journal of Religious Education* since 1995, *A Journal of Christian Education in Korea* since 1996, *Christian Education & Information* since 2000 and *Journal of Christian Education & Information Technology* since 2001 (Won-young Sohn and Ji-hye Kim, 2005). The relatively short history of these academic journals implies that there has been a limited amount of research on school religious education, and that most studies have converged on dealing with the issue of the ambiguity of *Religion*. Indeed, the theories and debates presented in those journals have identified various ambiguous aspects of *Religion* prevailing in the school religious education. For example, in his preparation of the draft of the model syllabus for the 7th National Curriculum, Chin-hong Chung points out three profound forms of ambiguity implied in the current form of *Religion* that produce contradictions in practices of *Religion*: ambiguity implied in the legal establishment of *Religion*; ambiguity in the constitution of

content of *Religion*, and the dilemma in the practice of *Religion* in school level (Chin-hong Chung, 2001). Gui-sung Kim also points out the ambiguity in the current textbooks for *Religion* because they are, for example, more focused on a particular religion than on the general theory of religion as expected in the model syllabus (Gui-sung Kim 2006). Some studies show the ambiguity between the public nature and the autonomy of religious schools (Byoung-chul Ko 2005; Chul-joo Kim and Byoung-chul Ko 2003). Sohn argues that, despite the positive evaluation of the statutory syllabus of *Religion* in the 7th National Curriculum, Christian religious education could be repressed because of the heavy stress on the general theory of religion in the model syllabus (Won-young Sohn 2001).

Among those various aspects of ambiguity, most debates concern the nature of *Religion* as a national curriculum subject and the identification of its aims. Sohn and Kim's research shows that studies on school religious education in Korea have shown a tendency to concentrate on educational aims rather than other aspects of education such as the teacher, learner, curriculum, educational environment and the evaluation (Sohn and Kim 2005). This is because the educational aim is the site where the nature of the subject is defined and the content is organised accordingly, but it is also the central area of the ambiguity. Thus, with regard to the nature of *Religion* there has been, on the one hand, a group of people who argue that as a national curriculum subject *Religion* should encourage ways to deal with what they think the subject-matter, i.e. general theory of religion and world religion, so that it can be valid and reliable for the openness of education, rather than focusing on denominational, faith based teaching. Those who take this standpoint argue for *Religion* for the public good of education, or in other words, '*publicness*' of *Religion*, and in order to realise their educational rationale they argue that *Religion* should take the form of religious studies about general theory of religion and about world religions in relation to fostering personal meaning or religiosity (Byoung-chul Ko 2005; Gui-sung Kim 2005; Chul-joo Kim and Byoung-chul Ko 2003; Jin-ho Ko 2001; Chin-hong Chung 2001, 1986). They define the nature of *Religion* differently according to their point of view: *Religion* as an education about religion, not of religion, for personality, social integrity and cultural development (Chin-hong Chung 2001); as for 'individuality within publicity',

conceiving ‘freedom of religion and liberal education as Humanities’ (Byoung-chul Ko 2005, p. 139); as a modern school subject teaching religion and culture within the context of religious diversity (Guk-sung Kim 2005), and as fostering religiosity or personality cultivated with religiosity (Jin-ho Ko 2006, 2001).¹⁰ Though there is difference between points of view on the nature of *Religion*, they can be grouped together as those who see the nature of the subject in terms of publicness of education in that Religion is conceived as liberal inclusive form of education about religion.

On the other hand, there is another position which forms a different response in regard to the rationale for the publicness of *Religion* known as *the denominational* position. This position understands the nature of *Religion* from the fundamentals of religion or the religious vocation of their religion while trying to response to the question of publicness of education.¹¹ Won-young Sohn, who defines *Religion* in Christian schools as Christian religious education, asks to reconceptualise it as relational personality-centred education based on encounter and conversation (Won-young Sohn 2001, p. 103). Similarly, Eun-ha Cho reconceptualises *mission*, a key aim of *Religion* for Christian secondary schools, such that ‘mission is both question and answer to the world and it gives rise to question for the contemporary people to seek new ways of life. In other words, it is the question to ask the meaning of the Gospel in the middle of participation to the world in the name of Jesus’ (Eun-ha Cho 2006, p. 197). Those from Catholic backgrounds tend to claim that in light of the universality of the Catholic faith, which is inclusive of and able to fulfil the publicness of education, *Religion* grounded on the Catholic faith is more truthful and more accountable to the publicness of education (Young-hei Choi 2006; Jun-gui Choi 2005; Kyung-yee Kim 2004).

A number of points can be drawn from the studies on ambiguity of *Religion*. First of all, ambiguity has been the central issue throughout the course of development of the subject. Second, in regard to the nature of *Religion*, two approaches have emerged, differing from each other according to the understanding of the nature of the subject: the former understands *Religion* as for

¹⁰ It is noticeable that those taking this position in Korea are mostly from Buddhist backgrounds or circles.

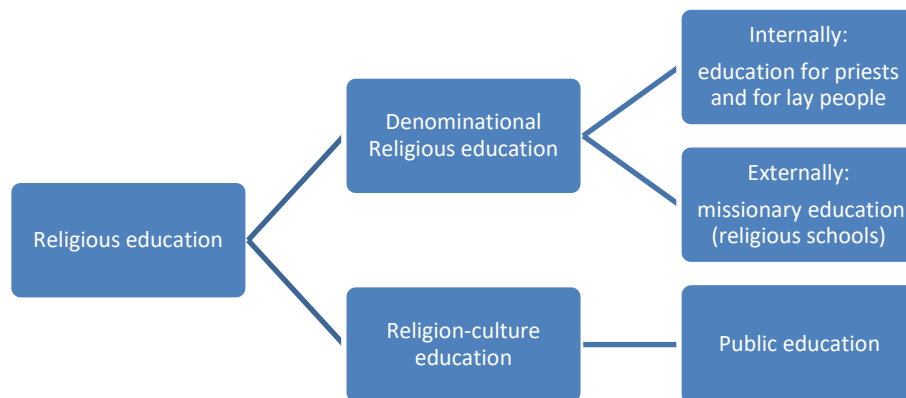
¹¹ People in this position appeared in the academic journals are mostly from Christian background.

publicness of education, and holds that it should take the form of general studies of religion so that it can be applied for individual meaning construction; while the latter understands *Religion* from religious vocation of each religion so that it takes denominational approach in order to nurture both faith of the religion and critical attitude to the world according to the religious vision. However, the latter has been criticised by those in the former with various reasons, such as introducing ambiguity into *Religion*, possibly violating pupils' religious freedom and autonomy and bringing irresolvable conflicts between the exclusive truth claims of discrete religious traditions, and threatening harmony among religions and in society. Thirdly, in spite of such critical charge upon the denominational approach, the finalised form of the statutory syllabus of *Religion* has emerged in a compromised form between the two approaches, which seems to have structuralised the practical ambiguity into the subject. Let us see the last point more closely.

The statutory model syllabus of *Religion* as the given curriculum by KICE tends to take the former approach while incorporating the latter to a degree, allowing time for a transition from a confessional or denominational approach to a generic and phenomenological approach to religious education. Chul-joo Kim and Byoung-chul Ko trace the theoretical development of this approach since the inclusion of *Religion* in the national curriculum. They find a trend whereby the theories consist of both a critique of ongoing denominational religious education and suggestions for differently conceptualised *Religion*, that is, *Religion* for the publicness of education, not for a particular religion (Chul-joo Kim and Byoung-chul Ko 2003). In the development of this approach, three scholars (Yi-heum Yoon, Chin-hong Chun and Chon-suh Kim) are significant for two reasons: because they provided the ground for this conceptualisation of *Religion*, and because while the first among them provided a theory of basic distinction between the different types of religious education, the other two took the central role in the preparation of the statutory syllabus on the basis of that theoretical distinction.

In his argument for the *Religion* for publicness of education approach, Yoon distinguished between different types of RE as shown in <Figure 1> below (Gui-sung Kim 2005, p. 20, modified by adding the element of *public education*)

<Figure 1 Distinction of Religious Education>



He argued that in a multi cultural and religiously diverse society the public education should not take the form of denominational RE because it may bring dangers into society, such as the danger of an imperialist cultural oppression from religion and the danger of exclusive faith. Against those dangers he called for a form of religious studies that pursues the objective understanding of religion. This ‘religion-culture education’ would aim at the cultivation of the mutual personality (Yi-heum Yoon 1986).

Chin-hong Chung shows a similar negative perception of denominational religious education. For him the existence of *Religion* in the public educational system is a scandal (Chung 1986, p. 26). He argued that the existence of *Religion* in schools is part of an intrinsic dilemma in public education, which can realise its possibility or meet its limit according to the relationship between its universality and particularity:

Public education can reach its highest possibility when its universality works as an adequately minimum norm by which a particularity can reflect on itself. But it will meet its limit when the universality is itself reduced to a particularity (Chung 1986, pp. 21-22).

This intrinsic dilemma of public education seems to be most acute with regard to *Religion*. This is because a religion, as a distinctively particular mode of existence, claiming for its understanding of ultimate reality, has a strong tendency to deny the possibility of other existences or particularities (exclusivism). However, public education can still include *Religion* through an approach in terms of generality or universality of religion, not as a denominational form. For this reason, Chung also argued for the conceptualisation of religious education as the object of knowledge. For this to be possible he takes phenomenological approach: he insisted on a transition from the confessional logic of *Religion* to the epistemic logic provided by a general theory of religious phenomena, by which the history and structure of religious phenomena are presented in a systematic way. Therefore Chung argued that religious education in public education should not be teaching 'religion', but should be teaching *about* religion as an object of knowledge, based on the systematic study of religious phenomena (pp.21-22).

Though Yoon and Chung's concerns were not expressed in terms of ambiguity, it is clear that their concept of *Religion* was based on the critical perception of the conflicting nature between the *public* and the *denominational*. Here their perception of both comes into question. For example, Yoon's distinction of religious education was based on his negative perception of denominational teaching as subjective and contentious. In contrast he seems to perceive *public* as a kind of neutral approach to religion by taking objective knowledge rather than contentious matter so that it can be available for all pupils. This is not true nonetheless. The world of reality is full of contentious matters, and this also applies to Chung. His conception of public education is not able to reflect what Bhaskar

calls a diffracted world, which cannot be exhausted by presumed ideas of it (Bhaskar 2008 & 1998). This diffracted world makes our knowledge contentious, asking to be open in the light of ontologically understood reality. Since truth is itself a contentious conception, religious education should be able to take those conflicting ideas of reality seriously, including truth claims of discrete religious traditions (Wright 2007). *Denominational* approach that presents truth claim of a particular religious tradition needs to participate with *public* approach in a mutual and critical way, but Yoon and Chung's negative distinction between them seems to block any possibility of this happening. This negative distinction or *separation* has since become a default position in arguing *Religion*, and thus any attempt to put them together has become problematic.

Adding to the main points of Yoon and Chung, Chong-suh Kim pointed to the ambiguity of the existence of denominational religious education in the public educational system. He explained that this ambiguity was recognised from the outset, when *Religion* was first legitimated as a school subject. The double-selective nature of the subject was intended to avoid the ambiguity, but it did not work out as it was supposed to. The recognised ambiguity was neither solved nor weakened since all religious school kept their denominational religious education while no public schools selected *Religion*. Furthermore, most religious schools did not provide an alternative course to *Religion* for their pupils (Chong-suh Kim 2001). In an attempt to eliminate this ambiguity, he proposed to establish a trans-denominational organisation as a medium for the construction of a general religious curriculum (Chon-suh Kim 1990; Chul-joo Kim and Byoung-chul Ko 2003). This proposal was accepted and Chon-suh Kim was appointed to prepare the draft of the syllabus of *Religion* as to be included for the first time in the 6th National Curriculum (Chon-suh Kim 2001).

The new curriculum theory of *Religion* began from the issue of ambiguity of *Religion*, conceived from the critical perception of denominational approach. In other words, the ambiguity of *Religion* was conceived through the critique of denominational religious education. The new theory made the two terms almost equivalent: the existence of *denominational* religious education is in

itself problematic, and produces *ambiguity*. This conceptualisation has in turn provided the *raison d'être* of the current curriculum theory of *Religion* in terms of *the publicness of education*, because it is the logic necessary to overcome the ambiguity conceived as being caused by the denominational approach. From this point of view, theories of *Religion* for the publicness of education have developed in terms of these key concepts, which are compatible with phenomenological approach to religion: object of knowledge about religion, religion-culture education, teaching about religion and systematic study of religious phenomena and cultivating pupils' mind accordingly.

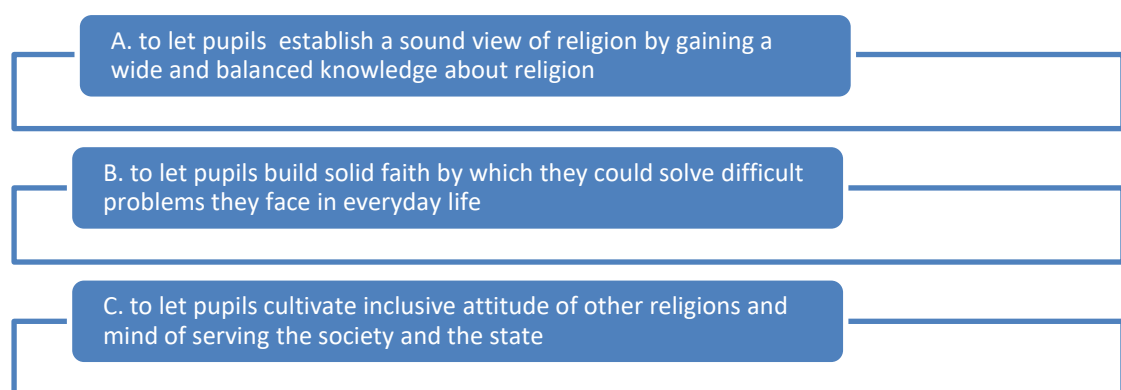
The problem: the compromised syllabus and the production of practical ambiguity

In spite of all such endeavours, however, as Kim noted, the ambiguity from the denominational *Religion* was not eliminated or weakened, even with the double-selective rule. Although the draft of the model syllabus was designed by Chong-suh Kim with the express purpose of fostering an approach of *Religion for the publicness of education* while eliminating the denominational approach, when the draft went to the judgement committee, they decided to produce a syllabus that compromised between the two approaches. It is because that they cannot ignore the actual situation of school religious education: religious schools have been almost the only place where *Religion* has existed while no public school has chosen it except the case shown in the first feature earlier. In other words, in spite of the new theory of *Religion* curriculum has been given as being available for all types of school, however, it has been the reality that only religious schools have taken the subject in their school curriculum. Religious schools have been the actual site where *Religion* has taken place¹². Thus the committee decided to reflect the reality in the formation of the syllabus while taking the inclusive, phenomenal approach as the basic ground so that the final form of the syllabus has become a compromised form (Chong-suh Kim 2001).

¹² As can be seen in <Table 1> in the Appendix, Christian (Protestant) schools are the major part (68.6%) of those schools who chose Religion in 2004. If it includes Catholic schools then the portion of whole Christian schools among those schools reaches to 84.7%.

The compromised character of the syllabus can be seen in the constitution of the contents of the syllabus as seen in <table 2> in Appendix. Out of eight sections of the contents, only the last section is provided as the place where denominational religious schools can propagate their religion, hence it can be education of a religion which can be used as a way for the denominational teaching or faith based teaching; while the rest of the sections are supposed to be taught more likely through phenomenological and inclusive model of teaching, hence it can be education about religion which can be used as a way for mature growing of pupils (Byoung-chul Ko 2009). The compromised character of the syllabus can be seen in the prescription of the aims of *Religion* as presented in <Figure 2>. Aim A is a derivation of the theory of *Religion* for the publicness of education: ‘a sound view of religion’ and ‘wide and balanced knowledge about religion’ reflect key concepts in the theory, such as ‘religion as an object of knowledge’, ‘general or universal theory of religion’ and ‘systematic study of religious phenomena’. Aim B is related to the denominational approach in that ‘solid faith’ is a key goal, although here it is conceived as instrumental for pupils in solving problems in their everyday life. By putting together the inclusive approach to *Religion* and specific qualities of publicness of *Religion* (serving the society and the state), Aim C implies intrinsic relation between the inclusive approach and publicness of *Religion*.

<Figure 2> the aims of *Religion* (The Ministry of Education 1995)



However, the compromised syllabus does not provide any pedagogy or an overall educational theory of how to take the seemingly contrasting approaches together in the actual

teaching context. It seems just a mixture of educational benefits from both approaches; a juxtaposition of objectives pursued as educational goals from both approaches under the name of the category of Liberal Arts to which *Religion* belong in the national curriculum. As the result of the compromised curriculum, *Religion* has remained being ambiguous between two approaches as seen in the prescribed aim. And more seriously, practical ambiguity has been embodied by the implementation of the mono form structure of the statutory syllabus as seen in the actual constitution of the content of those actual textbooks in the <table 3> of the Appendix.

As for those who advocate the inclusive religious education model for publicness of *Religion*, the compromised curriculum is regarded as the transitional process of *Religion* from the denominational to the public. However, as for those who are in religious schools, particularly for the Christian schools (the major part of religious schools) the statutory syllabus has produced and structured practical ambiguity into the actual site of religious education; at the same time the imposition of the statutory syllabus has limited religious schools in developing their own religious education curriculum.

Aim of the thesis

Concerned with the problem, the aim of the thesis is to explore a theoretical ground for religious education for the actual site of religious education, particularly for the major part of religious schools, viz. Christian schools.

It is because religious schools are the place where *Religion* has been *actually* existed; needless to say, it has been so from the very outset of the modern school system of the country; but more noticeably, *Religion* has existed almost exclusively in religious schools even after the inclusion of *Religion* into the national curriculum in 1981 and the introduction of the statutory syllabus under the double-selective regulation; it has been the reality of religious education in the country.

However, the current curriculum of *Religion* does not recognize sufficiently the reality; instead it has imposed a compromised syllabus upon the actual site with the result of practical ambiguity. *Therefore the thesis aims to explore a theoretical ground for the possibility of Christian religious education in Christian schools, which has been the actually and major site of school religious education in Korea.*

A Critically Progressive Exploration toward a theoretical ground for Christian religious education: from Ontology to Otherness

Concerned with the reality of *Religion* in Korea the thesis explores a theoretical ground that takes the default position of religious education in a particular religious tradition, Christianity in Christian schools, without dismissing the issue of publicness of the subject. What this implies is that the kind of publicness of *Religion* pursued from this position may not be the same as in the liberal inclusive position and that there might be possibility or necessity to make critical judgement between the differently conceived publicness of religious education. How, then, could it be possible to develop such approach and what would be the conception of publicness of *Religion* in the approach?

This is why the thesis takes the critical realist approach to religious education developed by Andrew Wright as the case with which the thesis begins its exploration. The relevance of Wright's work for the purpose of the thesis can be found not only in his critique of the liberal inclusive religious education but also in his emphasis on discrete (particular) religious tradition as the default position of religious education.¹³ Furthermore, his conception of pursuit of truth and truthfulness as the aim of critical religious education sheds light on our exploration how to conceive publicness of *Religion* when we takes our route from a particular religious tradition otherwise than the liberal

¹³ Wright has made the crucial critique on the liberal inclusive religious education in terms of the eclipse of truth (related with "learning about" religion) and the ascendancy of truthfulness (related with "learning from" religion); both result in the dissociation or the dislocation of truth from truthful life (Wright 2007).

inclusive approach. Therefore, having noticed that the same problems of *Religion* are dealt in his work, the thesis takes his approach as the stepping stone for the exploration of the thesis.

There is a crucial point in the critical realist approach, however, that makes the whole thesis a critically progressive exploration: the critical realist *Ontology*, which is the underlying principle of the critical realist religious education, while giving rise to another crucial question that puts the thesis in a critical stance, which entails a further progressive exploration of *Otherness*. Having faced the problem of inclusive religious education and the related postmodern mishmash spirituality, Wright has taken the critical realist position through which he argues for the utmost importance of resume of the sense of truth (Wright 2000, 2007). For this purpose, he takes as pivotal critical realist ontology originated by Roy Bhaskar (Bhaskar 1975; 1986; 1998 (originally published in 1979); 2008 (originally published in 1993); 2000; 2002; 2002a; 2002b; 2002c). However, the thesis notices a crucial problem of the ontology in regard to the lacuna of otherness. This makes the thesis envisage further dilemma that, when applied to the understanding of transcendence, the ontology seems to foster non-personal account of God, like Bhaskarian meta-Reality, while being unable to speak of personal account of God, like Trinitarian God of Christianity.

With the envisagement, the thesis sets out a critically progressive exploration of how to integrate critical realist ontology into a theoretical ground for the possibility Christian religious education. For this exploration, the thesis begins its journey from an immanent critique of critical realist ontology in order to reveal the heart of the problem, that is, a characteristic feature of the ontology, namely, the *agential-centred form of explanation* of reality, which results in the production of a lacuna of the dimension of *otherness*. The first critical step is entrained by the next steps of critical exploration, such as, examination of whether characteristic feature penetrates all stages of critical realism and exploration of how the feature permeates in each stage. Then it is followed by the exploration of how to fill the lacuna of otherness so that otherness can be

integrated within the theoretical ground, which will be called Ontology and Otherness. This philosophical exploration needs to be entrained by a further critical examination of Bhaskarian understanding of transcendence, that is meta-Reality, in terms of the inability to grasp ontological distinctiveness of otherness so that there merges the need of a theological ground which can integrate ontology with otherness. An account of Trinitarian God will be expounded and be integrated together with the philosophy of Ontology so that there will be a further qualification of the theory of Ontology and Otherness. Therefore, the thesis will be a form of critically progressive study from an immanent critique of ontology toward a theory of *Ontology and Otherness*. The theory can articulate, as a result, a model of explanation of human being in terms of double openness and personhood, which shed light on how to do religious education from the default position of Christian religious tradition of Christian schools. Thus, finally, the thesis will explore the critical realist religious education developed by Wright in relation with Ontology and Otherness so that the thesis can integrates both Wright's approach and the theory of Ontology and Otherness as the theoretical ground for the possibility of Christian religious education in Christian schools in Korea.

Contents of the thesis

The thesis as a critically progressive exploration comprises five chapters. *Chapter One* introduces the early stage of Bhaskar's ontological journey, in which the key idea of transcendental realism, which penetrates all stages of critical realism, was established. The chapter aims to critically explore transcendental realism in order to reveal its characteristic agential-centred explanation of being (reality), which leads to another key question of non-agential moment in which the other may be found with its genuine significance.

In *Chapter Two*, Bhaskar's social theory and dialectical turn are explored in terms of the agential-centred stance. The application of transcendental realism into social theory and further dialectical explanation of reality can be seen as sharing the characteristic feature of agential centredness. In this exploration, the non-agential dimension is raised more sharply than before in order to reveal the lacuna of the dimension of otherness in the critical realist social and dialectical theory. At this juncture, it will also be argued that although Bhaskarian agent can be dialectically open to the world, it cannot be ethical unless it successfully engages the genuine other out of its agential centredness.

Chapter Three attempts to fill the lacuna of otherness in Bhaskarian ontology by incorporating it into Levinasian Otherness. Levinas' concept of the other enables us to capture the genuine significance of otherness from the non-agential moment of engagement of the face of the other. This is known as the genuine moment of transcendence which consists of another dimension of openness to the other, and differs from the Bhaskarian dialectical openness grounded on being's agential movement. The openness to the other is an ethical openness, whereby one would take responsibility for the other up to the point of substitution for the other. In this chapter, the Bhaskarian openness will be incorporated into Levinasian ethical openness so that it postulates a double openness of the human being.

The focus moves to the level of transcendence in *Chapter Four*. Two contrasting accounts of transcendence are explored in regard to the possibility of otherness. While both *accounts* stand on ontological ground, it is the Bhaskarian meta-Reality that conceives non-duality as ground-state qualities inherent in all beings, but in doing so it makes impossible a genuine sense of ontology of otherness. In contrast, a classical Trinitarian account of God is based on the conception of personhood, whereby the otherness is considered not as an added quality but as constitutive of ontology of the being of God in hypostatical relation. A particular trajectory to the Trinitarian account is provided by referring to McGrath's 'iterative procedures' (McGrath 1999, 2002, 2008,

2009), Gunton's 'the Triune God as Becoming' (Gunton 2001),¹⁴ and Zizioulas's 'personhood and ontology' (Zizioulas 1985, 2006). At this juncture, the double openness postulated in previous chapters is conceived as being originated from the hypostatical relation of personhood of God, so that it further postulates a theory of stratification of human being between dialectical agent, ethical subjectivity and personhood.

Lastly, *Chapter Five* focuses solely on Wright's critical realist approach to religious education in regard to ontology and otherness. His critical realist approach to ultimate truth and truthfulness and his stress on discrete religious tradition as the default position of religious education are explored, yielding the conclusion that his approach is a moderate model in regard to ontology and otherness, hence appropriate to be used in all types of schools. When ontology and otherness in personhood account of transcendence are fully accepted, then his approach can pave a way for Christian religious education in Christian schools.

¹⁴First published in 1978.

Chapter 1 Ontology: Nature

Introduction

Learning is central to educational activity. There have been various ways to theorise about learning in education. However, those theories tend to fall into one of two contrasting stances: objectivist and subjectivist.¹⁵ At the heart of the objectivist accounts there is the claim either that reality is known to us as it is (absolutism), or that reality can be verified to the human mind through empirical test (positivism). The account makes a claim for infallibility of human knowledge. In contrast, in the subjectivist account reality is not the concern. Rather the focus is on the knowledge of reality as we perceive it through mind and language (constructivism). This has often commits irrealism. While absolutism may be charged with ontic fallacy, since it misses out the role of the human agent in forming knowledge, positivism and irrealism are charged with epistemic fallacy, since this approach reduces reality (or being) to knowledge of the reality, and hence makes all knowledge dependent on human mind and activity. In other words, the former misses out the transitive dimension of knowledge from its account, while the latter omits the intransitive dimension. In the situation of such a gulf between the two stances, and the fallacies that arise in consequence, there is an urgent demand to find a breakthrough for learning theory.

The philosophy of Bhaskar is capable of providing such a breakthrough, since his critical realism (CR henceforth) is a way of embracing these two stances without committing ontic or epistemic fallacy. Bhaskar's CR emphasises the dialectical process between reality and the possibility of human knowledge of the reality in order to reach as closely as possible to the truth of the reality.

¹⁵ The problem of the split of stances – rooted in a metatheoretical problem: an anti-realist philosophy: examples of those recognitions: Bhaskar's case of the critique of the split between positivism and conventionalism (Bhaskar, 1998, p.73, 1986, p.64) – critical realism as a meta-philosophy making a critique of metatheory of neo-Kantian-Humean-positivism.

This is a philosophical endeavour aimed at embracing both reality-based truth and the human agent's effort to access the truth.

Thus there is no problem for CR in maintaining *both* an objectivist (alethic or non-epistemic) conception of reality *and* an account of scientific practice that makes full allowance for the role of human agency in revealing certain processes, laws and causal properties whose manifestation (though not their reality) depends on our procedures for finding them out. (Hartwig, 2007, p. 479, emphasis original)

The initial aim that Bhaskar wants to achieve through this dialectical process is to re-vindicate ontology in the form of transcendental realism (TR henceforth) as the remedy for the fallacies, since it enables us to maintain an objectivist conception of reality (the intransitive dimension of knowledge), while allowing the role of human agency (the transitive dimension) in reaching a better knowledge of reality. In doing so, the so-called holy trinity of CR is established: ontological realism, epistemic relativism and judgemental rationalism. The way in which he vindicates ontology and establishes the triune principles is a form of transcendental argument: transcendental realism, which is distinct from Kantian transcendental argument, also known as transcendental idealism.¹⁶

Having established the TR thesis, Bhaskar then applies it to the social sciences, makes a dialectical turn of CR, and moves on to the spiritual turn, which reaches at the philosophy of meta-Reality.¹⁷ With regard to TR, it is crucial to note that the transcendental realist thesis is valid not only for the early stages of CR. Rather it is fundamental, and pertains to all stages, up to the final stage of

¹⁶ In establishing his argument Bhaskar resumes what Kant discarded as beyond the limit of human knowledge in the realm of knowledge that is transcendent (objective, not human-dependent), while allowing human capacity to seek for it (Hartwig, 2007).

¹⁷ Bhaskar himself distinguishes stages of the development of his critical realism: the original critical realism; dialectical critical realism, and meta-Reality (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010, p. 217). Here the 'early stage' refers to the original stage. The original CR, as a philosophy of science, consists of three sequential steps, from its interest in the philosophy of natural science, to that of social science, then to ideology critique; these are best worked out in Bhaskar's books *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975), *Possibility of Naturalism* (1998) and *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation* (1986), respectively. The TR argument is first postulated in RTS, then applied to the subsequent steps.

meta-Reality. Hence it can be said that the TR thesis is the fundamental philosophical methodology of the whole project of critical realism. As Hartwig rightly points out: 'The TR thesis is so central to any version of the CR case in whatever domain or field of application that one can reasonably claim to set it out in representative and clear-cut terms' (p. 474). Therefore, in this chapter the focus will be upon the TR thesis as postulated in the original stage of CR, through which one can discover how and why Bhaskar overcomes such dichotomy by re-vindicating ontology. The chapter aims to reveal, as the key point of the argument, that the TR thesis is a form of explanation of reality in terms of the intrinsic tendencies of reality itself, called here the agential-centred form of explanation. In order to reveal the point, the chapter traces Bhaskar's ontological journey up to the point of the establishment of the TR thesis. It then provides a critical reflection on the agential-centred ontology, which posits four characteristic features of reality of a being when understood in the transcendental realist way: the primary mode as 'implicit'; the causal intrinsic tendencies as 'properties' of a being; the intrinsic 'directionality from being to becoming', and the dependence of a being on its relation with the circumstances. The chapter will conclude by pointing out that the agential centredness gives rise to the question of 'non-agential moment', which is related with another question, that of the other.

1. Bhaskar's Journey to Ontology

1.1. The original concern – the absence of a theory of the real

Critical realism is a philosophical stance, originated by Roy Bhaskar. Since the publication of *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975), the first book in his CR series, his thinking seems to have developed into a self-sufficient philosophical system. That is, his critical realism has sufficiently developed the three necessary dimensions for it to be a metatheory: (1) *what* he wants to speak about (the content), (2) *how* to argue the content (methodology), and (3) its capacity for *application* to or dialogue with other discipline areas (application or critical realist embrace). However, his genuine concern is not philosophy *per se*; rather philosophy for him is a way through which he can reach at what he wants to talk about. Philosophy is a tool that enables him to criticise what he finds problematic, and to pave an alternative way towards it. What then is the subject he wants to explore through his *philosophical* project?

The order of publication of Bhaskar's early CR series reveals a logical sequence of subject matter: from nature to society, and then depth critique (of ideology). The first book, *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975), aims to provide a general theory of science: a philosophy of science capable of speaking of the real world, of ontology (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010; Collier, 1994). Its principal method of argument, named the transcendental realist argument, is subsequently applied to social science and to ideology critique, in *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1998) and *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation* (1986), respectively.¹⁸ Although the three-volume work shows its own developmental order, from the theory of natural science to that of society, and then ideology critique, Bhaskar's original concern was a social one. His paper 'Some Problems about Explanations

¹⁸ The term 'critical realism' is a hybrid of 'transcendental realism' postulated in RTS and 'critical naturalism' in PN. This hybrid term, although accepted by Bhaskar, was actually invented by those who followed and participated in his philosophical strand.

in the Social Sciences' (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010, p.22) derived from the thesis he submitted to the philosophy faculty of Balliol College at Oxford. He had set out to complete a PhD in economics, but as the nature of the thesis changed, he moved from economics to philosophy (pp.22-23).¹⁹

What was the reason behind Bhaskar's move towards philosophy? In his explanation of the diachronic development of CR, Bhaskar presents five phases of the philosophy of discourse of modernity as the cultural-philosophical background to its genesis and development (Bhaskar, 2002a, p.173).²⁰ Among those five phases the initial moment of CR is found in the third phase, with the problematic recognition of modernisation (and underdevelopment). It was Bhaskar's concern with modernisation and his subsequent conclusion regarding the irrelevance of economic theory for underdeveloped countries that led him to a philosophical quest. For Bhaskar, theories designed to impose a uniform form of society, that of the west, as a standard, so that the whole developmental process is understood as unilinear towards that given standard, fail to take account of the reality of underdeveloped countries. This recognition led him to look at philosophical tools with which to critique the irrelevance of the social science that generated such economic theories. However, he discovered within the philosophy of science at that time an inability to talk about the real world, a problem he calls a taboo on ontology rooted in epistemic fallacy. As he explains:

I went from economics to philosophy of science but ... [in] the text books in the philosophy of science ... you cannot see anything about the real world there either. ... So

¹⁹ In retrospect, as Bhaskar said, his critical realism had already been developed in mature form in this thesis. Although he was not awarded the degree, he was accepted by a publisher to work out the key ideas of the thesis in a more ordered and detailed form in the three volumes we have now. For more detailed explanation of his Oxford days, see *Formation*, Chapter 2.

²⁰ The five phases of the philosophy of discourse of modernity are (a) The Classical Philosophy of Discourse of Modernity as 'initiated with the classical English and French bourgeois revolutions of 1640-1660 and 1789' respectively, (b) High-Modernism with 'its heyday between the revolutions of 1848 and 1917', (c) The Theory and Practice of Modernisation as 'associated with the revolutionary watersheds of 1945, the end of the second world war, and 1947, the symbolically and practically significant de-colonisation and partition of India', (d) Post-modernism from 'the time of the revolutionary upsurge of 1968' and (e) Western (Bourgeois) Triumphantism, set 'in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc (1989-1991)' (Bhaskar, 2002a, p.167). For a more detailed critical account of the five phases, see Bhaskar, 2002a, pp.165-174.

I went back to philosophy and critiqued the epistemic fallacy, in other words the denial of ontology, at its roots. (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010, p.32)

What he actually found was the dominance of an implicit ontology in economic theory and the philosophy of science. This implicit ontology denies any questioning of the real world, a denial based on the presupposition of the impossibility of referring to the real world; but in doing so it simultaneously reduces the real world into the package of the given theories used for measure of the real world, a form of epistemic fallacy in that the reality is reduced to the knowledge of it (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010, p.32). Hence Bhaskar recognised a problematic absence of a theory of the real: the absence of ontology. His philosophical project was designed to talk about the real.

1.2. The root problem - empirical realism

Before beginning his discussion of how to talk about the real world, Bhaskar first focused on what prevents us from doing just that. From the moment of his recognition of the problem, Bhaskar reflected back in order to find the presuppositions or premises that had generated such absence of a theory of the real world. He found that at the root of the problem was the prevailing empirical realism underpinning the 'implicit ontology' (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010, p. 34; Bhaskar, 1975, p.16). In RTS Bhaskar presents three broad positions in the philosophy of science, of which two are governed by the principle of empirical realism: Humean theory of causal laws and Kantian transcendental idealism.²¹

Humean theory denotes a philosophy of science which fashioned 'our image of science' (Bhaskar, 1975, p.12). It is a positivist view of science in that knowledge gained *scientifically* is regarded as factual and constantly verified in an actual sequence of events. Such positivist science aims at explanation of phenomena in terms of causal laws, established according to the criterion of a

²¹ The last position is transcendental realism, which is the central theme of Bhaskar's philosophy.

constant conjunction of events. This position takes events as the ultimate objects of knowledge, and considers a constant conjunction of events as the condition of the possibility of knowledge from which causal laws can be ascribed (p.24). As Bhaskar explains, 'a constant conjunction of events apprehended in sense-experience is at least a necessary condition for the ascription of a causal law and ... it is an essential part of the job of science to discover them' (p.29). However, such a condition of knowledge presupposes the world as a closed system, like a laboratory experiment. In empirical activities where the situation is controlled, it may be possible to secure the condition of a constant conjunction of events by restricting interfering factors in order to identify the causal laws being sought. Such a closure cannot be sustained in the real world of open systems, where various mechanisms with diverse effects intermingle. Therefore, a sequence of events cannot be taken as the case that makes science possible. Instead, Bhaskar argues that it is the endurance and working together of natural mechanisms in an open system that make scientific activities possible and intelligible (pp.45-47).

Attempts to understand the world on the basis of an implausible condition such as a constant conjunction of events is a categorial mistake. This view of science is based on the category of experience, accompanied with an understanding that the world 'may be viewed as surfaces whose points are in isomorphic correspondence' (pp.24-25). By taking the category of experience as the basis of knowledge of the world, this position conceives of an 'empirical world' (p.28), defining the world as only empirically real. This conception reduces the world to the category of human experience, so giving a general ontological function to a particular epistemological concept. This is epistemic fallacy, in that the statement of being is always reduced to the statement about our knowledge of being. Yet the world exists independently of human epistemic activities, and likewise, ontology cannot be reduced to epistemology. Empirical realism fuelled by Humean theory of causal laws produces implicit ontology based on the category of experience. This is a mistake, since it is unable to speak of the real world or natural necessity, which is independent of and greater than

human experience. Concealed in such a philosophy of science is anthropomorphism, since it is an attempt to grasp the world only through human experience (pp.16-28).

Kantian transcendental idealism is also charged with empirical realism. Unlike Humean theory, this position takes models or ideals of natural order as the objects of scientific knowledge. In Kantian idealism, there is a basic presupposition of the impossibility of referring to the real world. What is possible is to construct artificial models or ideals of the natural order through the function of the mind. As such it is a form of idealism; it is transcendental idealism in that it takes a constant conjunction of events as necessary (as raw data) for imaging explanatory models that correspond to those data. Though not sufficient, a constant conjunction of events 'is still necessary, for the attribution of natural necessity' and knowledge in this position is regarded 'as a structure rather than a surface' (p.25). However, by claiming the impossibility of referring to the natural order of the world, while instead reducing the world to a human construction or model out of the necessity of a constant conjunction of events, transcendental idealism is also charged with the production of implicit ontology.

Bhaskar's intellectual journey, as so far described, reached the encounter with the situation in which empirical realism dominates the domain of scientific explanation of the world, but is unable to make in-depth explanations of the world in an ontological sense because of either the superficiality of explanation (Humean), or the irrealist negation of the possibility of access to the real world (the Kantian). It should be noted that neither of these two positions of science governed by empirical realism are able to acknowledge the distinction between transitive and intransitive dimensions of knowledge, or the dialectical process between the two dimensions in the formation of knowledge of the real. This is because the positivist Humean theory of causal laws neglects the transitive dimension: a neglect of the social character of knowledge that is apparent, for example, in the laboratory test which is already informed with antecedent knowledge or dependent on antecedent social activities (pp.16,28), while the Kantian transcendental idealism neglects the

intransitive dimension of knowledge, since 'the natural world becomes a construction of the human mind or, in its modern versions, of the scientific community' (p.25). What is needed is a theory of the real, a theory of depth-ontology which is able to grasp the dialectical process between the two dimensions.

2. Re-vindication of Ontology – Transcendental Realism

Recognition of the problem of empirical realism raised the central question of how to access the real world. This behoved Bhaskar to set his philosophical project on the re-vindication of ontology. In this project he moved first to discern the dialectical process of knowledge formation between the intransitive and the transitive dimensions, then to depth-ontology, in which he argues the ontological distinction between causal laws and patterns of events, and finally to his transcendental argument of how science can come to have knowledge of natural necessity *a posteriori* (Bhaskar, 1975, pp.18-19).

2.1. Two dimensions of knowledge and the holy trinity of critical realism

Bhaskar's critique of empirical realism had already alluded to what a theory of the real should be in order for it to be able to speak of the real world. It must be a 'non-reductionist theory'. Empirical realism is refuted for its reductionist attitude, whereby the world is reduced either to human experience or to human mind; in either case the stance is charged with anthropocentrism (Bhaskar, 1975, p.44). As such, empirical realism fails to grasp the distinction between two dimensions of knowledge and their dialectical relation. Consequently, the produced views of the world are characterised either by a surface realism or by idealism, neither of which are appropriate

to talk about things of the real world. It was already clear to Bhaskar that what was needed was a depth-ontology.

And it was already clear to me that you could not make sense of a notion of laws or principles in a domain such as economics unless you construed them tendentially, as something that only tended to happen in actuality. Then the question was what was it that tended to happen? It was obvious that the kind of ontology one needed was a depth-ontology that involved structures, mechanisms and fields, something other than events. (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010, p.35)

Though failure to make such a depth-ontology was attributed mainly to the two positions of empirical realism, nonetheless Bhaskar did not discard those positions entirely. Rather he attempted to transcend their 'one-sidedness' by taking what is true of each of them in a dialectical process. He conceptualised the real things in nature as natural kinds (the real causal agents) in terms of powers or tendencies intrinsic to them, rather than regularity of events. He insisted that they exist independently of human theories or statements about them, since they exist in the real level which is ontologically distinct from that of events and experiences, and from which they generate events according to their intrinsic tendencies; they are the *intransitive* objects of science, constituting the intransitive dimension of knowledge. At the same time he recognised that the descriptions of the real things may be historically and culturally specific, a recognition that knowledge of reality may vary according to different perspectives. This denotes the *transitive* dimension of knowledge. But not all knowledge gained from any historical and cultural perspectives can be freely admitted as adequate to be true to the reality (Dean et al., 2005, p.7); Bhaskar refuted the unconstrained admission of any perspectives as perspectivalism, to the extent that in this position 'there are no facts ..., only interpretations' and truth becomes ultimately a matter of 'expression of will-to-power', in that judgemental rationality is theoretically impossible (Dean et al., 2005, p.7; Hartwig, 2007, p.345). Differences between perspectives may be complementary to a true knowledge of reality, or

may compete with each other. It is the object itself that brings constraints upon the various perspectives so that judgemental rationality may be achieved, or it may be possible to determine which perspective is truer than others to the natural necessity of the real things in nature. Therefore, having recognised the two dimensions of knowledge, Bhaskar applied them co-operatively in his transcendental realist way in order to pursue not knowledge as 'plausibility of reality', but truth of reality (Bhaskar, 1975, p.166).

Here we can see the holy trinity of critical realism, which denotes 'a triple constellational identity-in-difference' (Hartwig, 2007, p.238). The insistence on the independence of intransitive things from human activity espouses ontological realism. While it is possible to gain knowledge of them, such knowledge will be relative, since they are time and space specific. This epistemic relativism is 'a limited and provisional epistemology', but still admits of the possibility (and necessity) of truth' since it is anchored in the real things of the world by which the ground of rationality is provided for judgement between different accounts of reality: judgemental rationalism (Dean et al., p.8). Therefore:

(1) the possibility of judgemental rationalism (in the INTRINSIC ASPECT of the TD [transitive dimension]), presupposing (2) the actuality of epistemic relativism (in the extrinsic aspect of the TD), presupposing (3) the necessity of ontological depth-REALISM (in the ID [intransitive dimension]). (2) is also entailed by (3). (Hartwig, 2007, p.238)

2.2. Bhaskar's transcendental realist argument

How then did Bhaskar pave the way to the real objects, while overcoming the problems within Humean and Kantian theories? The answer can be found in his transcendental argument which entails a depth-ontology: transcendental realism.

The recognition of the prevailing problem of empirical realism behoved Bhaskar to direct his intellectual journey to an interest in a metacritical theory with which he could 'unlock empiricism while immanently engaging it'. This set him to read backwards from Marx to Hegel and then Kant, and through this reading he discovered that 'transcendental arguments were the key' for such a theory (Bhaskar and Hartwig, 2010, p.40). Following a Kantian direction, Bhaskar resumed what Kant had discarded as beyond the limit of human knowledge in the realm of knowledge which is transcendent (objective, not human-dependent), while allowing human capacity to seek for it (Hartwig, 2007, pp.476-479). This marks the point of divergence between Bhaskarian transcendental realism and Kantian transcendental idealism on the way to knowledge of the real objects: both agree on rejecting the empiricist account of science as it exhausts its valid content by atomistic facts and their conjunctions; but they take different roads in regard to how to access, or whether it is possible to access, the real level.

On the one hand, transcendental idealism argues that it is impossible to know objects-in-themselves (the noumenal) beyond the appearance of them (the phenomenal), but it is possible for the human mind to impose order on the objects-in-themselves by imaginary model building through synthetic *a priori*. That is, objects-in-themselves are not the objects of knowledge as they are assumed as unknowable, but their appearances (events) come under the investigation of the mind and are then explained by imagined models built by subjective synthetic activities (Agar, 2005, pp.30-31). The Kantian synthetic activity is a synthesis between *a priori* categories (like unity and causality) of mind and sense data. For Kant, the capacity of an object to be known 'refers simply to the cognitive capacity of the human mind' (p.31); in other words, we know objects because of the ways that we represent them via our cognitive functions. Kant argues that human mind has two types of *a priori* concept: particular and general concepts (categories). With the former the mind can make judgement on certain representations, but the latter is the ground of intuitive understanding on which the function of the former depends. Categorical concepts like unity and causality are exclusively *a priori* capacities of the mind; they function 'to unite various concepts and

their judgements and are indispensable to intuition'. For an example of this process, events are grasped by the mind and then represented through the net of concepts. Then, each significant part of the representation is interpreted intuitively by certain (basic) categories, and those interpretations are united into the way that provides an explanatory model for the sequence of events. Thus, the synthetic *a priori* first unites *a priori* concepts and sense experiences, then builds a model of what is beyond the appearance (p.32). Nonetheless, it should be noted that the model is a human-mind construction, an '*object-for-us*' rather than an object-in-itself. What we look for in the Kantian sense is 'information about how the objects are within the parameters of how they appear to us rather than how they are independently of these parameters' (p.31). Thus what is explained in Kantian transcendental idealism is not objects-in-themselves, but objects-for-us (Agar 2005), objects-for-us that consist of both realism about 'the concrete contents of experience' and the explanatory *form* of that experience, contributed by the mind (Collier, 1994, p.26). It is a Kantian involution of ontological structure 'within the transcendental subjectivity of mind', in order to sustain 'the concepts of the necessity and universality of laws', concepts such as causation and unity (Hartwig, 2007, p.149, Bhaskar, 2010, p.204).

On the other hand, Bhaskar's work involutes the involution, locating 'the *a priori* structures that make experience possible' in 'the intrinsic features of objects-in-themselves'. This is 'the *real a priori*' (Agar, 2005, pp.32-33). The key question raised by Bhaskar is: *what must be the case if knowledge of things is to be possible?* In other words, what must be the *a priori* structures or the intrinsic features of objects-in-themselves that make knowledge of the objects possible? In answering this question, Bhaskar brought the notion of 'law' to refer to the *a priori* structures of things, then postulated TR arguments as a means to discover it. While Hume considered conjoined events as the ground of the possibility of general knowledge, Bhaskar argues instead for the nature of the connection of events as the ground of that possibility. If knowledge or science is to be possible in open systems of the world, then 'there must be necessary connections between matter of fact' and what makes such connections of events (not all, but some) in the open systems a kind of

necessity of things. The concept of law is applied to explain the connections between events and the necessity of things (Bhaskar, 1975, pp.143-144).

The consideration of the possibility of knowledge in open systems led Bhaskar to discern the categorial independence of causal laws from the patterns of events, and to the argument that 'causal laws must be given on ontological basis in the enduring and transfactually active mechanisms of nature' (p.144). He established 'mechanisms' as the real, through philosophical arguments on the basis of the concept of 'necessity'. With regard to a sequence of events, the Humean theory establishes a law from the regularity of events, while the Kantian imposes models to explain reasons why 'the predicates instantiated in the law-like statement should be conjoined', explaining 'the connection between ... putative cause and putative effect'. But the transcendental realist draws a distinction between necessary and accidental sequences: 'A sequence Ea.Eb is *necessary* if there is a generative mechanism M such that whenever Ea, Eb tends to be produced'; a sequence is accidental if Ea and Eb are not connected by a mechanism. If one considers the fact that in open systems the mechanism M is 'subject to interaction and interference between myriad causal mechanisms', it is implausible to expect the mechanism M to produce strictly the empirical effect of the sequence Ea.Eb (Hartwig, 2007, p.459). Other mechanisms may be combined to produce patterns of events that are mostly conjunctural (accidental), and are not constant, so that it is clear that 'empirical regularity or a constant conjunction of events is not even necessary for the ascription of a law' (Bhaskar, 1975, pp.163-165), as seen in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Status of constant conjunction of events (Bhaskar, 1975, p. 164)

	Necessary	Sufficient	for Law
Classical empiricism	V	V	
Transcendental idealism	V	X	
Transcendental realism	X	X	

Bhaskar drives depth-ontology from the categorial distinction of causal mechanisms from patterns of events. Depth-ontology is ontology capable of capturing the real world, which cannot be achieved by explanations at the level of a sequence of events (model-imposing idealism) or experience (empirical regularity). Events and experience are part of this ontology and of the world, but they are ontologically distinct from generative ‘mechanisms’. So Bhaskar distinguishes three overlapping domains of reality: real, actual and empirical. Among these, ‘[t]he Empirical ... is comprised only of experiences; not all events are experienced; the Actual consists of events and experiences, but *mechanisms*, insofar as they are not realized, do not belong here; nevertheless they are real’ (Collier, 1994, p.44, emphasis original). In their relations, mechanisms generate events when they are exercised; hence it is possible that they may exist as tendencies when not being exercised; when exercised they generate (or are manifested in) events at the actual level; then events may or may not be experienced or perceived by humans (Bhaskar, 1975, pp.45-47). Mechanisms (or structures) are real causal agents (or causal laws) that in combination in an open system generate the ‘flux of phenomena that constitute the actual states and happenings of the world’. Hence, according to Bhaskar, ‘[t]he world consists of mechanisms not events’ (p.47).

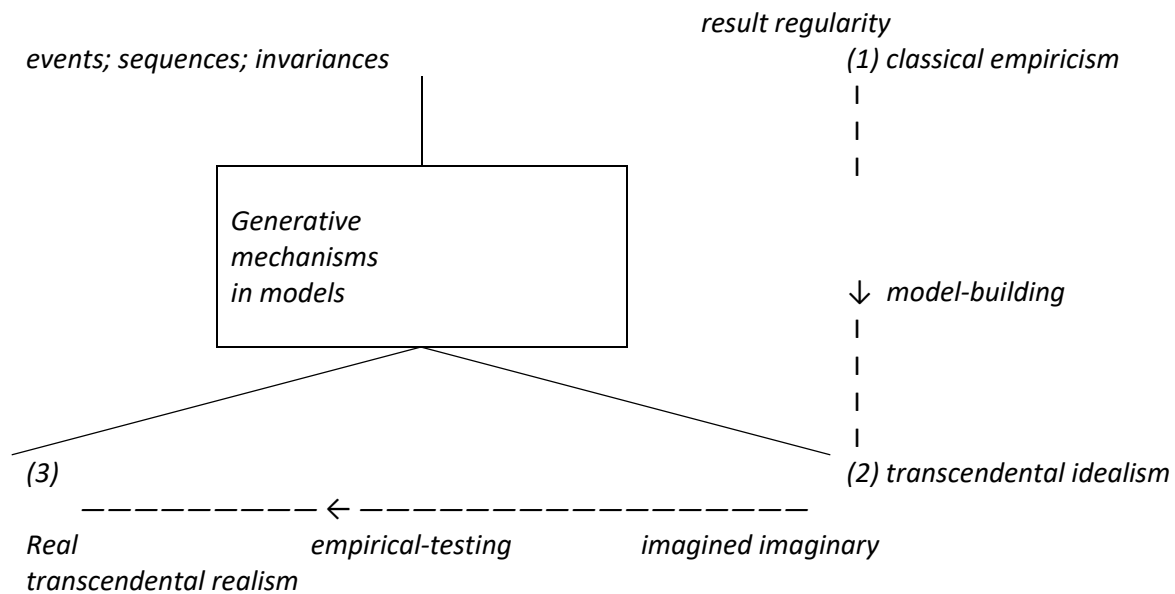
Table 1.2 Three domains of reality (Bhaskar, 1975, p.56)

	Domain of Real	Domain of Actual	Domain of Empirical
Mechanisms	V		
Events	V	V	
Experiences	V	V	V

If causal mechanisms of things in the domain of the real are what make knowledge of things possible, how then does Bhaskar argue for the possibility of access to the domain of the real? He does so using his transcendental realist argument. He takes a Kantian road to the extent that the access to the real objects needs to affirm the ‘*a priori* philosophical investigation into the process whereby the mind can cognise objects’, and because ‘*a priori* philosophical truth cannot be deduced from logical principles and instead must rely on the first being experience of the world’ (Agar, 2005,

p.33). This Kantian road is reflected in the TR argument, as seen in the diagram below, which shows a three-step process of TR argument which indicates the logic of scientific discovery.

Diagram 1 The Logic of Scientific Discovery (Bhaskar, 1975, p.145)



In the process of scientific discovery, the following three questions may be asked:

- (i) Is there an empirical regularity that constitutes a *prima facie* candidate for a law?
- (ii) Is there some reason, other than the regularity, why the predicates instantiated in the law-like statement should be conjoined?
- (iii) Is this reason located in the enduring powers of things and transfactually active mechanisms of nature? (Bhaskar, 1975, pp.163-164).

Answering yes to question (i) renders a 'protolaw'. With an answer of yes to question (ii) we have strong grounds for a law. Finally, with the yes to question (iii) we have a law. The first step is typical of the Humean empirical realism that takes regularity as the criterion of a law, while the second step is the Kantian imposition of an explanatory model on the regularity, explaining 'the

connection between antecedent and consequent, putative cause and putative effect'. However, the third step is the transcendental realist way, and can only occur when 'a realist interpretation of the mechanisms posted in the model becomes acceptable' (p.164). Both Bhaskar and Kant take the step from (1) to (2) 'as involving creative model building in which plausible generative mechanisms are imagined'. Yet whereas the Kantian journey ends at (2) in the mode of transcendental idealism, Bhaskar's transcendental realism necessitates the step from (2) to (3) because only in the third step can there be 'an adequate rationale for the use of laws to explain phenomena in open systems (where no constant conjunctions prevail) or for the experimental establishment' through which the postulated mechanisms can be subjected to tests (p.15; 145).

In the process between (2) and (3), the model at stage (2) may be modified when it is judged to be incorrect; then a new model or explanation can be formulated and tested. Thus the process is one of explanation, not of deduction or induction, although both are often involved; this process is called *retroduction* or *abduction*, and aims to explain the causal powers that lie behind the surface phenomena:

To explain something ... is to collect or *colligate* ... it under a new schema of concepts, designating the structures, mechanisms, powers, etc., producing it. To pursue causal explanation a mode of INFERENCE is required that takes us behind surface phenomena to their causes, or more generally from phenomena lying at one level to causes lying at a different, deeper one. This is *retroduction* or *abduction*. (Hartwig, 2007, p.195)

More specifically, Bhaskar provides the procedure of the transcendental realist explanation in terms of the DREI (C) model, where 'D' is the step of description of the resulted regularity of the collected data; 'R' is the step of retroduction of some explanatory mechanisms as plausible models of unknown mechanisms using 'antecedently cognitive resources'; 'E' is the step of elimination of competing explanations on the basis of their inferior empirical adequacy; so that 'I', 'the

identification of the causal mechanism at work is hopefully achieved', whereby 'the initial theory is corrected in the light of the new knowledge (C)' (Hartwig, 2007, p.195).

As such this process of TR argument can explain the possibility of scientific growth and provides the possibility of truth claim (once refuted as a taboo) with authority; the authority lies in the argument itself. But this truth claim is not an absolute claim, but one that is necessitated by the consideration of the possibility of an adequate rationale for laws in open systems. Bhaskar's use of the modal term 'must' does in fact reflect the inevitability of the condition in scientific activities; in the question-form of TR argument (what must be the case if knowledge of things is to be possible?) it is used to denote not the case of 'indubitable' features of experience²² (or universal certainty), but the necessity of what is *a priori* (necessity of the generalised social concepts) while remaining disputable or interpretable through the competition between indispensable claims (Morgan, 2004, pp.319-320). Therefore, the use of the modal term 'must' in such claims does not mean that 'there are definite *stated* transcendental grounds and an exclusive *set* of definite stated conditions of those grounds'. Rather, it is a feature of the TR argument that one can argue that there are definite grounds, but the statements of them are not definite. TR argument, in this sense, is characteristic of 'uncertain certainty' (p. 321).

As we have seen above, Bhaskar postulated his depth-ontology, critical realism, through the TR argument: the real of a thing is its intrinsic tendencies, which are qualified as transfactual. With the postulation of the transcendental realist thesis at this early stage of his journey to ontology he became able to set the firm foundation on which later developments of CR are anchored. Ontological realism is the cornerstone of this foundation, since it is taken as a key thesis (what is the real of a thing) into later states: in the social level he argues for ontological realism of human agents

²² Callinicos, using Taylor's model, ascribes the confidence of transcendental argument to indubitable features of experiences. On this position he critiques Bhaskar's transcendental argument as dangerous when it uses the modal term 'must', because it seems to assert the condition of possibility of experience with a certain authority or power in forms of discursive leverage or status by associating it with an *a priori* 'truth' tied to indubitable features of experience (Morgan, 2004, p.320).

and social structures (1986, 1998, 2008), and in the spiritual and meta-Reality levels for ontological (categorical) realism of the Self and the cosmic envelope (2000, 2002a, 2002b). Thus it is possible to state that if Bhaskar's fundamental account of things (ontological realism) is deficient for any reason, then it can be assumed that this deficiency could be generated in later stages. In fact, it is argued that there is a deficiency. In the following section, therefore, the task will be to subject Bhaskar's ontological realism to a critical reflection in the light of the deficient element.

3. An Argument: 'Agential-Centredness' of Bhaskar's Transcendental Realism and the Question of 'Non-Agential'

This section reflects on mechanisms as tendencies and causal agents. It points out two key features in the account of ontological realism in early CR: the primary mode of things (or beings) is 'implicit', and it is 'agential'. This reflection is crucial for the wider thesis because it enables us to argue the possibility and significance of 'otherness', particularly in the critical realist account of social reality, and to argue that this 'otherness' seems to produce a point of divergence between the Bhaskarian account of the transcendent, and the Trinitarian account of God in Christianity.

3.1. Mechanisms as tendencies and the primary mode of things as 'implicit'

As already noted, Bhaskar argues that reality is stratified and differentiated so that what makes knowledge of things possible is the layer of causal mechanisms of things at the real level. He seeks to find the necessary condition for the possibility of scientific knowledge (or scientific activity), and then argues for the possibility of scientific experimentation on the basis of ontological distinction and independence of generative mechanisms (or causal laws) from patterns of events. He

explains these mechanisms as the ‘fundamental’ ontological structure of reality (Kaidesoja, 2005, p.33), as ‘a real categorial structure of the world [existing] independently of our experiences and historical conceptualisations of that world’ (pp.34-35). The ontological basis of mechanisms is the causal powers of things, ‘which they possess necessarily due to their essential intrinsic structures’ (p.38). Mechanism is the most representative term he uses for the real categorial structure of things.

However, mechanisms as objects of scientific activity are ‘unobservable’ or ‘non-transparent’, although their generated events may be the objects of experience (Kaidesoja, 2005, p.35; Agar, 2005, pp.34-35). Unlike transcendental idealism and empirical realism, transcendental realism regards mechanisms (*a priori* objects or objects-in-themselves) of science as not directly conformed to human reason, but as knowable through the process of scientific discovery (p.35).²³ This is because Bhaskar grounds the possibility of science in the object-in-itself, which he can argue is intelligible (that is to say that it is capable of becoming the subject matter of science and philosophy). In that regard he has much in common with the empirical realism of Leibniz and Hume, but, unlike them (and this is where he can sustain a coherent transcendental realism), he argues that the object-in-itself is not transparent to reason (or, reduction of the object is not a way to know it) (pp.34-5). This knowableness but non-transparency to reason is attributed to the characteristic nature of a mechanism, i.e. its tendencies. What then would be the characteristic tendencies of mechanisms?

Bhaskar argues that the underlying generative mechanisms are best understood as tendencies, since ‘[t]endencies may be regarded as powers or liabilities of a thing which may be exercised without being manifest in any particular outcome’ (Bhaskar, 1975, p.14). The mechanism

²³ Agar provides the following figure to indicate the transparency or non-transparency of the real objects in transcendental idealism, transcendental realism and empirical realism (Agar, 2005, p.35).

	Object-in-itself	Is the Subject Matter of Science Transparent to Reason?
Transcendental Idealism	Unknowable	Yes
Transcendental Realism	Knowable	No
Empirical Realism	Knowable	Yes

established as the real gains a status of necessity for its enduring powers, since '[n]ecessity is ascribed essentially to the activity of the mechanism' (p.165). Bhaskar explains mechanisms as natural kinds, and their way of working or behaving (their tendencies) as natural necessity (p.183), since natural necessity is the notion that 'things have *real ESSENCE* or intrinsic structures ... which possess causal powers and constitute them as natural kind' (Hartwig, 2007, p.320 emphasis original). But it is necessary to distinguish between what mechanisms can do and the way they tend to do it. Bhaskar suggests that causal laws of mechanisms are better analysed as tendencies than as powers, because 'in the concept of tendency, the concept of power is thus literally dynamized or set in motion' (Bhaskar, 1975, p.50). Thus he makes a distinction between two concepts of tendency: tendency₁ and tendency₂. The first refers to 'a power which may be exercised unrealised, a power normically qualified' in open systems, while the latter refers to 'the enduring orientations' or 'pre-formed structure' of a thing, something toward which a thing 'is predisposed or oriented' or 'a state or condition to do it' of a thing (rather than the possibility of transfactual activities). Hence tendency₂ is a 'possession of a thing' (pp.229-230; 235).²⁴ With this distinction it is clear that tendency₂ is

something more than a power. It depends upon distinguishing from within the class of actions naturally possible for a thing ... in virtue of its being the kind of thing that it is, those which are typical, usual or characteristic of that thing as distinct from others of its kind. (p.230)

Therefore, while tendency₁ designates powers of things to exercise, it is tendency₂ that designates a condition or 'realisation' of a thing in virtue of its intrinsic essence, although the realisation is always dependent on other stimuli or intervening conditions (p.232).²⁵ This indicates

²⁴ For examples of this distinction, 'Men, but not dolphins, can (i.e. possess the power to) smoke; but some men are non-smokers'; or 'To say Tania pushed the door open completely ... implies that she ... has the power to do it. But to say that she *tends* to push the door open is to say something more' (Bhaskar, 1975, p.230, italic original).

²⁵ Therefore, it can be said that our knowledge of a tendency₂ can differ from judgement about the realisation of it, because of other conditions intervening in open systems (Bhaskar, 1975, p.232).

one more aspect to be considered: circumstance. When an appropriate set of circumstances is met then such a thing acts in open systems and the exercise of tendency₂ will also be qualified as normical (p.231).²⁶ Bhaskar accounts for the ascription of the appropriate set of circumstances for a thing to exercise its tendency₂ in terms of intrinsic/extrinsic (or releasing/stimulus) conditions to that thing. He categorises features such as spontaneity, self-determination and acting for a reason as intrinsic causes, while the category of extrinsic causes includes pulls and pushes, 'structural relationships as well as the momenta of other things' (p.235).

Drawing on Bhaskar's own account on tendencies of mechanisms, this thesis argues with regard to the ontological realism (of mechanisms) in early CR that reality (thing or being) has four constitutive features:

- A. If a thing (being) is explained in terms of tendencies of its mechanisms at the real level, which are normically qualified (transfactually qualified without being necessarily exercised or experienced), then it can be said that the *primary* mode of the thing (being) is being '*implicit*' rather than being always explicitly actualised or experienced.
- B. What are implicit are the properties *of* a thing or ways of acting *of* that thing whether they are described as tendencies, liabilities or powers.
- C. When a thing (being) is understood in terms of its primary mode of being implicit, then its realisation renders *directionality* of that thing: from being implicit (potentiality) to being realised (both ontologically and epistemologically), so legitimating a logical structure of processuality of reality from '*being to becoming*', a process of realisation.
- D. The process of realisation is dependent on its circumstances, which can either enable or constrain the process.

²⁶ Bhaskar provided a brief explanation of the relationship between the two concepts of tendency and their circumstance as follows: (i) X has power (or liability) to do (or suffer) \emptyset ; (ii) X is in enduring condition to do \emptyset , i.e. it is predisposed or oriented towards doing \emptyset ; (iii) X will do \emptyset , given an appropriate set of circumstances, in virtue of its predisposition, in the absence of intervening (or countervailing) causes (Bhaskar, 1975, p.231).

The intrinsic (releasing) would not be tendency₂ which makes a thing as it is, but can be understood as intrinsic powers to realise tendency₂; in other words, it tends to be or do tendency₂. But such a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic circumstance seems to be unnecessary, because the concept of tendency₂ already contains such tending powers; so what is implicit is not static, but is set in motion. This tending power can be understood in terms of the idea of 'agential'.

Before moving on to the question of 'agential' it should be noted that the four constitutive features of reality will be key referent points for further reflections on the later development of CR (when it is applied to social beings and to the transcendental being), to which those features seem to pertain, with the result, it will be argued, of indifference of 'otherness'.

3.2. Mechanisms as causal agents

Having concerned with causal laws (mechanisms) of a thing, Bhaskar gives an account of the world of our everyday action and the world of things that we perceive as '*an incompletely described world of agents*' (1975 p. 105, italic original); the world is full of agents but our description of them is incomplete or limited. The term *agent* is assigned to describe things in the world in order to indicate their 'autonomy', in contrast to regularity determinism (which is only established on the basis of constant conjunction of certain events in a closed system). Causal laws or mechanisms as tendencies of things are not conceived as describing patterns of events or legitimating the prediction of events as in regularity determinism. Rather, Bhaskar argues that they must be conceived 'as situating limits and imposing constraints on the types of action possible for a given kind of thing' (p.105). Such action should be understood as a feature of manifestation of tendencies of a thing. Moreover, it should be recognised that in an open system there might be other tendencies operating together or intervening so that the action is produced as it is. Thus, actions or events do not occur arbitrarily, but they are constrained and necessitated by the tendencies of the laws involved. When the sufficient

condition is met, the laws of things as tendencies have powers to cause, necessitate and constrain, though not in deterministic fashion, in the actual process of the world (p.105). Therefore mechanisms (as tendencies) are causal agents. In this sense Bhaskar provides 'two concepts of cause': one is the laws as causal agent, and the other is the sufficient condition; in his words, 'I use the term 'cause' to refer both to the antecedent event, condition or agent which *triggers* a mechanism and to the mechanism ... itself' (p.252, italic added). Thus science can be said to be concerned with answering the question, 'how can a thing, event or process be controlled by several different kinds at once?' (p.111). However, in an open system, it could also be said that a complete explanation is a limited concept in view of the complex determination.

Thus when Bhaskar describes the world as composed of agents, he means that it is composed of causal mechanisms of things working in combination with others in the world of open systems (p.105).

Agents are particulars which are the centres of powers. In an incompletely described world of other agents powers must be analysed as tendencies. And laws are nothing but the tendencies or ways of acting of kinds of thing. By an agent I mean simply anything which is capable of bringing about a change in something (including itself). (p.109)

Now note how Bhaskar explains the relationships between causal agents. When talking about the world as an incompletely described world of agents he focuses both on mechanisms as causal agents and on their relations with outer circumstance which triggers them to act. This shows that he conceives the world in terms of two concepts of cause: causal agent and causal condition. Such a distinction is challenged by Collier, who sees a serious problem with Bhaskar's conceptualisation of causation in terms of ontological distinction between cause and condition. Although Bhaskar argues for 'ontologically' grounded distinction of cause/conditions, Collier points out that such distinction is based on 'practical concerns' with *the* cause. In the earth, says Collier,

‘there is nothing that is ‘the cause’, only *causes*; and these include ‘conditions’. The cause/conditions model may be termed an interventionist model, i.e. ‘a model of idling conditions suddenly stimulated into operation by an agent’ (Collier, 1994, p.125). So, in nature ‘most causal processes are almost imperceptible operations of almost indiscernible, and complexly interacting, tendencies’. This is also true at the macro-social level, since ‘outstanding human actions may appear like ‘causes’ in the midst of ‘conditions’ of which thousands of human (largely routine) actions²⁷ with operation of tendencies are composed. Therefore, for Collier the notion of condition is a relative one, since conditions themselves always involve tendencies already at work, which will codetermine the outcome with the ‘cause’ (p.126). In such an interventionist explanation, conditions can be conceived as the background in relation to the intervention of some agent who is concerned with a particular object, seeing it as the causal agent. Collier’s critique reveals that Bhaskar’s way of conceiving reality in terms of cause/conditions is practical understanding, in that reality is seen from the inside of things, while ascribes other as conditions.²⁸ In this sense it can be said that Bhaskar’s TR thesis is characterised with a form of ‘being-centred thought’ in its understanding of reality. In fact, it should be noted that this practical way of understanding is an inevitable feature of human action, including human scientific activities, since humans are not omniscient and can see the world only from a certain position at one time. However, it is argued here that there is another point that should be taken as significant: that of seeing the world from the ‘agential’ understanding of reality.

3.3. Bhaskar’s ‘agential-centred’ position and the question of ‘non-agential’

²⁷ These ‘thousands of largely routine human actions’ are what construct a social structure. Thus, although social structures are ontologically distinctive and irreducible human agency, human powers are integral to both categories of social beings. This account will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 2.

²⁸ In fact, it should be noted that this practical way of understanding is an inevitable feature of human action, including human scientific activities, since humans are not omniscient and can see the world only from a certain position at one time. However, it is argued here that there is another point that should be taken as significant: the ‘agential’ understanding of reality.

As seen earlier, TR is itself an argument for the possibility of access to the real object (structures) of a thing. This necessitates the ontological distinction between the domain of real, and others. From this Bhaskar postulates his theory, which is first and fundamentally about the transcendentally approved ontology of realism. At its core is the explanation of natural necessity (mechanism) in terms of tendencies, which makes possible scientific activities; the TR thesis is primarily concerned with mechanisms, then with the relationships between mechanisms. Bhaskar focuses first and most importantly on the ontological account of natural necessities (mechanisms and their tendencies), which is given in terms of the two dimensions of 'what' they are and 'how' they behave. The explanation of reality is anchored on the properties (tendencies) and autonomy (agential) of mechanisms, with additional consideration of the combination with other mechanisms in open systems as circumstance; hence it is an explanation only of mechanisms themselves and their relations with others. Such an explanation of reality is in a sense characteristic of a form of self-referentiality, i.e. making explanation of a thing in terms of it being true to itself.²⁹ It is a form of explanation of being on the basis of being itself. However it seems to lose sight of anything other than being, 'otherwise than being' or 'non-agential'; hence the significance of non-agential seems not to be given sufficient consideration.

This characteristic of being-centredness³⁰ can be seen more clearly in Bhaskar's theory of tendency and circumstances, in which tendency₂ is mostly ascribed as something that makes a thing as it is, ascribing thing as a kind. Hence it can be said that tendency₂ is the ground of the concept of agent, because it confers autonomy on a thing. By combining the concept of tendency₂ with agential character it can be said that *a thing (or being) has an intrinsic power to realise what is implicit in it (alethic truth) in a certain way while its circumstances (conditions) may function as enablements or constraints on the process*. But this process is dependent on the circumstance. With regard to

²⁹ Such self-referentiality is a key issue to understand, and explains the transcendental Self in Bhaskar's meta-Reality.

³⁰ Since the thesis concerns not only nature but also other realms of reality, the term 'being' rather than 'thing' is used here, because it is an inclusive term referring not only to things in nature but also to beings in the social and possibly in the transcendental realm of reality.

circumstances Bhaskar distinguishes the intrinsic and the extrinsic; he assigns 'stimulus' to 'extrinsic' circumstance, which can be categorised as outside conditions. At the same time he mentions extrinsic circumstance as a cause, but seems to present this outside condition not as agential but only as stimulus or trigger. This indicates a way of seeing reality in terms of the intrinsic tendencies of a thing: seeing reality from inside a thing. In other words, a thing is defined in terms of what it *has*, its property. A thing 'is' what it has and it is *the* cause. Consideration of a thing's relations with its circumstances, through which it may change, comes only after that thing 'is' defined; so 'to be' is grounded on 'is'; 'to be' is only conceivable from and following 'is'; more seriously, 'to be' is originated in 'is', seen as realisation of 'is'. This postulates a logical direction of *being to becoming*. The processuality of a thing is ascribed to its intrinsic nature, while acknowledging the dependence of its realisation on conditions. All discussion begins from what being 'is'. This is why Bhaskar's ontology is called here 'being-centred', and the being is always agential with regard to itself. By assigning every movement or change *from* what is intrinsic to being, Bhaskar's ontology is characterised by 'being initiative' or 'agential initiative'. In the case of social reality, as we will see later, this could be a form of 'I (intentional mind) initiative'.³¹ Therefore, the TR argument seems necessarily and initially to drive its discussion to what reality 'is', and then moves on to talk about relationality with others.³² Therefore here one can see another aspect of the logical structure of TR thesis: 'being *then* others'.

The 'being-centred', hence 'agential-centred' explanation seems to be a constitutive reason for the insufficient description of, or loss of interest in, the significance of 'non-agential' in early CR. It could be particularly so when CR is applied to social reality, where social beings (human agent and

³¹ Archer's explanation of social relations in terms of internal conversation of self can be seen in this point of view since the explanative stance is given to the reflexive and mediating function of mind (Archer, 2003).

³² It may be related with Bhaskar's restricted understanding of natural science. Kaidesoja points out that Bhaskar's description of scientific experiment is one-sided, meaning that 'it deals only with experiments in physics and chemistry', not those in life sciences (Kaidesoja, 2005, p.40). Benton also points out that 'Bhaskar's conception of natural science is far too restricted', so that it seems to have led him to 'adopt an anti-naturalistic rather than naturalistic conception of the relationship between natural and human world and, accordingly, between natural and human science' (Kaidesoja, 2005, p.40).

social structures) are understood as ontologically distinct from each other in terms of intentional mind or relatively enduring tendencies respectively, and where further ontological distinction is attributed to the relations between the two social beings. There seems here to be a repetition of being-centred thought or explanation, in that insufficient attention is given to the significance of non-agential moment occurring between persons, with a possible result of the discovery of 'other than being (intentional)' as Levinas points out,³³ which may render the notion of 'otherness' in CR. Therefore, while this point of critique would not invalidate Bhaskar's ontology of beings as natural necessity, it is valid and helpful to the extent that it reveals the characteristic of being-centred thought in Bhaskar's early CR, which in turn could result in missing the significance of non-agential moment in reality, particularly in social reality. As such the question of 'non-agential moment' is a question about the other. By extension it can be a question challenging the validity of the logical order of being to becoming and being to others.

Now, how can 'non-agential' possibly be conceived or established within the terrain of critical realism without invalidating the key tenet of ontological realism? Although this is a task to be engaged with in Chapter 2, it should be noted here that RTS does contain some glimpses of what non-agential moment would be like. First, Bhaskar states that with the intervention of other causal laws in open systems it is plausible that powers may wane and disappear and mechanisms may be transformed. 'Such transformations must themselves be analysed as events in open systems' and such event is non-enduring thing, a mere event, a totally affected mechanisms incapable of production' (Bhaskar, 1975, p.236). Bhaskar's ascription of such transformation as an event is remarkable because event or moment is the only way to conceive 'non-agential' as its mode if it is not a thing (or being), since thing is conceived here as agential. Consider what would be otherwise than being: one could think of non-being as the case of non-agential, but when Bhaskar ascribes non-agential as event it must be something that *happens* rather than simply non-*being*. In fact, the

³³ After establishing the *possibility* and *necessary* ground of 'non-agential moment' in social reality within CR in Chapter 2, it will be Levinas's philosophy of the other that is taken as providing *sufficient* accounts of the 'non-agential moment'.

term 'non-being' is a key term in his later work, *Dialectic*, but there it denotes a middle stage (passing away or begoing) pertaining to the process of being to becoming (Norrie, 2010, p.13), in which the genuine sense of non-agential is hardly contained. However there is another passage which touches upon a sense of non-agential. In his distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic conditions of circumstance for mechanisms to act, Bhaskar explains the extrinsic category as including pulls and pushes, 'structural relationships as well as *the momenta of other things*' (Bhaskar, 1975, p.235, italic added). From this passage it can be inferred that the existence of others, other than oneself, is the very condition of such non-agential moment, and that the mode of encounter with the outer world can either be one of enduring relationships (with structural others) or one of moment of encounter with other person. Drawing on those passages it is possible to assume the non-agential as *moment* (event) aroused by extrinsic causes (others).

Critical realism presents a strong argument for the re-vindication of ontology, and it seems that it successfully defends its key argument against epistemic fallacy rooted in empirical realism, which prevails in modern philosophy and discourses. As a result, it has become firmly established with increasing acceptance among various disciplines. The phenomenon of increasing acceptance has proved its high applicability. One may find reasons for the applicability of CR not only from its relevance as the remedy to empirical realism, but also from the fact that it is a kind of a meta-theory or meta-philosophy, defined by its underlabouring for sciences, meaning 'a philosophy of and for science and cognate practices, aspiring in the case of the social sciences to supply the general conceptual schema they currently lack, which is indispensable for the general flourishing of research that would make them effective agents of emancipation' (Hartwig, 2007, p.490). However, its scale as a meta-theory might lead us to lose sight of the fact that CR is itself at the fundamental level a form of explanation which is postulated in Bhaskar's earlier work as transcendental realism. Transcendental realism is the fundamental tenet of critical realism, persistent over and integrated

into subsequent developmental stages of this philosophy. The explanatory form taken by TR is ‘a causal explanation’ of a phenomenon which attempts ‘to identify aspects of, or otherwise elucidate, its causal history’ by ‘uncovering of structures, powers, mechanisms and tendencies that facilitates or produce the phenomenon to be explained’ (p.195). Since all stages of critical realism contain TR as the first moment (called IM in Bhaskar’s *Dialectics* [2008]) from which other aspects are incorporated or integrated to form a specific stage of critical realism, it can be said that the characteristic features of transcendental realism are also persistent in all the stages, and that, more importantly, TR is itself a significant causality in forming each stage as such.

This chapter has identified transcendental realism as a special form of explanation, pointing out a characteristic feature in terms of its explanatory stance, viz. ‘agential-centredness of being’: the intrinsic tendencies of a thing are qualified as transfactual so that they are regarded as the agential causal powers of that thing. Thus transcendental realism is the way to re-vindicate ontology in terms of the intrinsic tendencies of being, taken as the explanatory stance from which that being and its relations with the circumstances are explained. More specifically, TR as a form of causal explanation is defined by its explanatory stance: it is the agential intrinsic tendencies *of* a being; that is, it explains a being fundamentally from the agential causal powers of that being. Therefore, the chapter designates the term ‘agential-centred’ explanation to describe the characteristic feature of transcendental realism, because ‘agential’ highlights the key point of the argument that TR as a causal explanation finds the causal powers primarily from inside a being and its relationality, rather than from something outside of a being. This raises the question of the non-agential moment, which in turn gives rise to another question of exteriority or the other. Though these questions might be only a marginal interest in Bhaskar’s work, it is possible to draw certain features of the non-agential: the ‘non-agential’ as extrinsic cause and in the mode of moment (event). The following chapter will attempt to discover whether this characteristic feature of explanation is persistent in Bhaskar’s theory of social reality.

Chapter 2 Ontology: Society and Human Agency

Introduction

In the previous chapter, it was shown that transcendental realism lies at the heart of critical realist re-vindication of ontology. It was argued that transcendental realism, as a form of causal explanation, is characterised by agential centredness: to explain a thing according to the intrinsic tendencies of a thing. This is because tendencies defined as transfactual (or normical) make possible knowledge of a thing. The intrinsic tendencies are natural and necessary to a thing for it to be such as it is, so they are understood as autonomous, working as agential causal powers for the existence and manifestation of a thing through its relations with the circumstances.

The main objective of this chapter is to examine whether agential centredness is persistent in Bhaskar's theory of social reality. In order to meet the objective, the chapter takes into account two stages of Bhaskarian critical realism: critical naturalism and dialectical turn. Critical naturalism is the result of the application of transcendental realism to social science, as shown in *Possibility of Naturalism* (1998, first printed 1979) and in *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation* (1986). In the first book, as the title indicates, Bhaskar explores the natural necessities of each of two social beings (society and people) in terms of 'knowable structures at work in the social domain', which are 'particularly analogous, but irreducible, to those identified in nature', in that 'the characteristic modalities of explanation may apply equally well' to both spheres (Hartwig, 2007, p.196).³⁴ Then, from the relationship between those two ontologically distinct social beings he derives an explanatory model of social relation, the Transformational Model of Social Activity (TMSA). Corresponding to this model, in the second book he further explores how a specific form of social

³⁴ The term 'naturalism' is taken to stress 'the specificity of the ways in which the movement from manifest phenomena to explanatory structures is achieved in different domains' (Hartwig, 2007, p.196).

relation, transformation rather than reproduction, is possible in the ongoing social relation. He integrates the axiological dimension into the theory of social transformation by postulating the theory of explanatory critique, making the point that transformation is not simply a change of any kind, but is necessary for human emancipation. Crucial for our argument here is the pivotal role given to human agency, rather than social structures, who undertakes such critiques for emancipation. We will examine whether Bhaskar's social theories, particularly in his *Possibility of Naturalism*,³⁵ share the same characteristic of 'agential centredness', and will give particular attention to their account of the human agent, because the non-agential moment, raised as a key question in the previous chapter, can only be conceived in her particular type of relation with the other person. Following this, we need to go further, beyond this development stage and into Bhaskar's dialectical turn, presented in his book, *Dialectics: The Pulse of Freedom* (2008, first printed 1993). It is there that he integrates the transcendental realist account of human agent with the dialectical nature of reality, providing a fuller account of social reality in that the human agent is established as an ethical agent. In examining his dialectical turn, it will be shown that *Dialectics* also shares the same characteristic features of the agential-centred form of explanation. Furthermore, through critical analysis of the pivotal concepts of absence and alethia, it will be argued that the accentuation of agential centredness has resulted in attenuation of the significance of the non-agential moment so that it has produced a lacuna in critical realism, viz. the dimension of otherness of the other, which needs to be articulated in an appropriate manner.

1. Critical Naturalism

1.1. Ontological journey from Nature to Society: The problem of dichotomy

³⁵ The other book, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, is taken into account only with regard to the theory of explanatory critique in section 2 of the chapter, in relation to Bhaskar's dialectical turn.

As noted earlier, Bhaskar's initial concern was a social one: the irrealist problem of application of economic theories to underdeveloped countries. Recognising the inability of those theories to talk about the real world of those countries, he moved to examine the philosophical background of the social science underpinning them. There he found a taboo on ontology that negates any questioning of the real world as irrelevant. This realisation led him into further inquiry, from philosophy of social science to the philosophy of science itself, since nature (materials) is ontologically more basic than and prior to society; from there he re-vindicated ontology in terms of transcendental realism. Subsequently Bhaskar embarked upon the next stage of the ontological journey, back to society, with the conviction that social science can be established on the transcendental realist ground while also recognising peculiarities of social beings (structures and human agents)³⁶ and their relationships with each other. By carrying forward the key tenet of transcendental realism he theorised the possibility of naturalism of the real causal powers (natural necessities) of the two social beings and postulated an explanatory model of their relationship. However, in doing so he had to overcome the same pattern of problem he had faced earlier: the problem of empirical realism persistent in theories of social science in a form of dichotomy between two types of determinism, viz. collectivist and individualist reductionism or hermeneutics and positivism. Let us begin from that point.

It has been noted that Bhaskar identified empirical realism as the root problem of philosophy of science, owing to its inability to talk about the real world. In the application of the transcendental realist thesis to social science he diagnoses the same pattern of problem. The effects of positivism on the philosophy of social science have been hegemonic in the forms of 'an ontology of experience, *empirical realism*, and a sociology of man, *sociology of individualism*; all incorporating transcendental idealist and collectivist variants' (Bhaskar, 1998, pp.19-20, emphasis original). This coupling of empiricism and individualism together with the tacit dominance of positivist thought are

³⁶ In this thesis the terms 'structures' and 'human agents' are used interchangeably with 'societies' and 'people', respectively.

diagnosed by Bhaskar as responsible for the social scientific '*malaise*'. The 'acceptance of the actualist presupposition that laws fully describe, and so completely control, the everyday world of perceived things' is nothing but 'positivism's blanket determinism', which leaves no room for human agency in social life, so that it has brought into being a contrasting form of determinism, total voluntarism, as the simple inverse.³⁷ In the case of hermeneutical tradition, the acceptance of the positivist view has resulted in the misconception of objects of knowledge as events, which in turn has encouraged 'the definition of the social by reference to the category of *behaviour*' (p.20, emphasis original). This individualist, empiricist and positivist view in social science is also marked out for the production of hermeneutical dualism between agent and structure, theory and history, and the universal and the unique (p.20). This dualism indicates the dichotomy, characteristic of the social sciences, which implies a choice between determinism and freedom and is expressed in the debate between the different social scientific positions of Durkheim's collectivism (stressing structures) and Weber's voluntarism (stressing agency) (Dean et al., 2005, p.9). According to Bhaskar's diagnosis, Durkheim's approach combined 'a collectivist conception of sociology with positivist methodology' so that it falsely attempted to 'sustain a concept of the social on the basis of the category of the group', while Weber's combined 'neo-Kantian methodology with a[n] ... individualist conception of sociology' so that it too made a futile attempt to 'sustain a concept of necessity on that of experience'.³⁸ A residual empiricism is found in both cases, preventing a real scientific approach concerned with the *real* relations between those social necessities (Bhaskar, 1998, p.31).

With regard to the dichotomy and the consequent reductionism, Bhaskar tried to synthesise the two positions in a critical realist way. He did so first by drawing distinctive points from each: the human being as meaning-producing agent (from Weber and the hermeneutic position), and humans'

³⁷ 'Sartre's (or Goffman's) freely chosen selves and Durkheim's (or Parsons') internalized values reflect in the last instance the same mistaken notion of law.' (Bhaskar, 1998, p.20)

³⁸ Bhaskar is aware of the existence of non-, or even anti-individualist tendencies in Weber's thought, and of anti-positivist strains in Durkheim's thought. However he is concerned with their dominant aspects (Bhaskar, 1998, p.72).

necessary relations with transfactual and enduring structures (from Durkheim and the positivist position); then by postulating a theory of an explanatory (not predictive, as it presupposes a closure)³⁹ model of social relations (Dean et al., 2005, p.9; Bhaskar, 1998, p.21). However, it should be noted that the synthesis is possible on the ground of other ontological features of reality: stratified reality and emergence.

1.2. Stratified reality and the theory of emergence

In open systems of the world myriad mechanisms interact and interfere with each other. Reality of things is structured with various strata; for example, one can see a distinction between the material basis of organic life and that of human social life, the former as prior to the latter. In the case of human beings, different layers, such as chemical, biological, psychological, socio-economic and cultural, can be considered with their specified predicates, and together constitute the totality of those human beings. Those predicates 'ought not to be regarded as differentiating distinct kinds of events or things but as differentiating distinct kinds of mechanisms' (Bhaskar, 1975, p.119; Collier, 1994, p.108). Each layer or stratum of reality is attributed with different mechanisms at work at that level. A higher level stratum (or a less basic layer) of the structure can be explained as being emergent from a lower or more basic layer, or antecedent level of stratum (Bhaskar, 1975, pp.169-170). Thus they are not arbitrarily composed structures, but ordered series of generative mechanisms.

³⁹ It is argued that there are causal laws or generalities working at the structural level rather than at the level of event in social life, and that those structures mesh in the open situation so that it is impossible to make decisive test situations for predictions of specific social events. To say that it is possible to predict social behaviour is similar to claiming the reducibility of those causal laws to empirical regularities, which is only possible in a closed situation under the control of experimenters whose intentions may bring differences in their findings. As seen before, this kind of empirical realism is rejected successfully in transcendental realism, and the same principle is applied here in PN. Therefore social science cannot be predictive, but must be '*exclusively explanatory*' (Bhaskar, 1998, p.21 emphasis original).

Although some theorists propose a reductive materialism, whereby a fully developed science of material is considered as being able to explain everything, theories of emergence refute this position in terms of the irreducibility of a higher level from a lower one (Collier, 1994, p.46). In fact, with his theory of emergence Bhaskar stands against two fronts: 'against dualist or pluralist which assert the complete independence of higher strata on lower, and against reductionists who assert the ultimate unreality of the higher strata'. Instead he explains the ordered mechanisms or the relation between higher and lower levels of mechanisms in terms of rootedness and emergence. The higher level is rooted in and emergent from (out of) the composition of the lower levels (p.110).⁴⁰ Such theory takes two compatible forms of explanation: diachronic explanatory reduction and synchronic emergence. While diachronic explanatory reduction enables us to reconstruct 'the processes of the formation' of the higher-order entities and to explain them by 'the principles governing elements out of which they are formed', in the case of synchronic emergence it is shown that 'the higher-order principles cannot be completely explained in terms of lower-order ones' (Bhaskar, 1998, p.98).⁴¹ The incomplete explanation of a higher-level mechanism by a lower-level one is due to the irreducibility of certain principles of the higher-level mechanism because they are emergent powers, emerged out of the composition of mechanisms of the lower level. Therefore, 'by emergence is meant a process whereby a new power or entity results from the coming together of existing powers or entities' (Dean et al., 2005, p.9).

Bhaskar's theory of emergence reveals the complex relationship of objects in the world of open systems, where causal laws or principles of each object are in complex relations with each other, not only within the same level but also across different levels. Higher level entities (comprehensive entities) are capable of acting back on the materials out of which they were formed.

⁴⁰ Collier adds an aspect of composition to this process, since a higher level mechanism is not simply rooted and emergent, but out of composition of many cases of rootedness (Collier, 1994, p.116).

⁴¹ Bhaskar points out the ambiguity contained in the notion of reduction, because there are three possible senses of reduction: as basis, explanation or prediction: 'If it is asserted that B can be 'reduced' to A it may be being claimed merely (1) that A provides a basis for B; (2) that A explains B; or (3) that knowledge of A enables us to predict the behaviour of B' (Bhaskar, 1998, p.98). Out of those three, Bhaskar argues for 'explanation' as the acceptable sense of reduction (Collier, 1994, p.112).

From this capability is derived the function of the higher level entities to set boundary conditions for the lower levels. The irreducibility and emergent character of higher-order levels shows that they are 'open in respect to ... the principles and description of lower-order level' (Bhaskar, 1975, p.112). In such complex relations, however, each level of reality keeps its autonomy, since agential mechanisms of each level provide 'liberty of spontaneity'⁴² to themselves; while it is also true that they come to work together with the possible result of the emergence of new entities or powers. Therefore, it is important to note that if those mechanisms are *real* in the transcendental realist sense then their complex relations themselves are also *real*, and that emergence as a form of complexity is also 'an irreducible feature of our world, i.e. it has an irreducible ontological character' (p.113). A new property emergent out of such complex relations will thus require a new category to be conceived, as it is ontologically irreducible and distinct from that whence it has emerged.

With regard to human agency, there is a particular point to be noted in Bhaskar's theory of emergence. As will be seen later, Bhaskar establishes human agency on a transcendental realist ground in terms of humans' intrinsic causal powers (reasons in mind acting in freedom). The point in question regards their origin: where do the powers come from or where are they located? This is a metaphysical question since Bhaskar himself asks 'whether there is a bearer or substance whose powers they are; and, if there is, as to what its identity is'. Exploring these questions, he first argues that human powers are *sui generis* real, rendering the organisation to operate with radically new principles in an emergent level, which is traditionally known as mind. Then he advocates a position of '*synchronic emergent powers materialism*' (SEPM, henceforth) (Bhaskar, 1998, pp.97-98). As a theory of emergence SEPM is materialist only in the sense that those mental powers are emergent powers, 'not occurring in the absence of matter, but not reducible to material powers'.⁴³ This theory

⁴² This means that each level has a freedom to use the power to act according to its own nature ascribed to agential mechanisms of that level (Collier, 1994, p. 119).

⁴³ But it should be noted that although his theory of emergence does take matter as a part of the chain of emergence so that higher-order entities can be explained by it, he certainly does not accept reductive materialism, which he calls central state materialism, in that entities in all levels are somehow completely explained by material (Bhaskar, 1998, p.97).

of 'synchronic' emergence is not incompatible with diachronic explanations of emergence (Collier, 1994, p.156), but it goes beyond the latter by dubbing emergence 'synchronic' in nature. In diachronic explanations, an emergent stratum is explained in terms both of the time it happened and of its conditions, otherwise it could not have happened; this means that emergence is characterised with temporality. But under the synchronic principle, an emergent stratum is conceived such 'that it could have existed from all *eternity* alongside the one in which it is rooted, just as for Thomas Aquinas it was in principle that the universe could have existed for all eternity alongside of Creator' . Thus SEPM is, on one hand, a characteristic explanation of human powers of mind, though tentative, and on the other hand it raises a question about causal criteria of the existence of that which holds the capacity to produce effects on matter. Bhaskar himself asks 'whether there is a bearer or substance whose powers they are; and, if there is, as to what its identity is' (pp.156-157, *italic added*). Though he leaves this question open, he provides a set of possible answers to be considered (Bhaskar, 1998, p.98).⁴⁴ Whatever the answer may be, it is interesting that in his attempt to theorise emergence, by refuting reductive materialism and by dubbing emergence 'synchronic' in nature Bhaskar seems to open the possibility of explaining how emergence occurs in terms of what is beyond material, time and space. Yet whilst at this stage his theory of SEPM would be seen as permissive (Collier, 1994, p.156), it can be considered as a seed or a premature explanation of ultimate (or eternal in the sense referred to above) cause of emergence, which he develops later fully in his meta-Reality; there, what is traditionally known as the transcendental reality is taken as the answer, but explained rather differently in terms of the cosmic envelope. To this point we will attend in another chapter of the thesis. For the time being, it will be sufficient to mention that his explanation of mind in terms of SEPM is compatible with the

⁴⁴ With regard to the questions of whose powers, or where powers come from, Bhaskar provides the following possible answers: (a) mind is not a substance but 'a complex or set of powers ... historically emergent from and present only in association with (certain complex forms of) matter; (b) an answer based on the possibility of existence of a substance as the bearer of the powers but whose nature is at present unknown. Answer (b) entails two further possibilities if it is correct (meaning that mind consists of the powers of a substance): (b-1) the substance must be matter, which reduces SEPM to a form of materialism indicated by neurophysiological evidence; and (b-2) the substance is of an immaterial kind, so that SEPM is reduced to a species of dualistic interactionism indicated by work on paranormal phenomena (Bhaskar, 1998, p.98).

characteristic features of his ontological realism explored in the previous chapter; the reasons for this will be explored later in the section on human agency.

A point peculiar to this theory of emergence should be addressed here, with regard to the question of non-agential moment. The theory of emergence signifies the non-agential moment. It is a form of explanation for an emergent property which cannot be explained by any lower level mechanisms but only by the 'coming together' of different mechanisms. The term 'coming together' presupposes both the other mechanism, different from one kind, and a moment of being together (in whatever way it is). This means that emergence as an ontologically distinct feature does confirm the impossibility of explaining it solely from agential causal powers of entities at the lower level. There is non-agential moment for those entities which may be like open space, or which may be termed synergic moment, but whatever the case it is 'non-agential' moment to the intrinsic tendencies of those entities. Moreover, the property emergent out of the composition of those entities is independent of the lower level entities to the extent that it is not completely explained by them; the emergent property is not completely attributed to the intrinsic causal powers of the lower level components. It is independent of their agential movements. Thus it can be said that the existence of emergent property signifies the non-agential moment beyond the agential-centred explanation.

1.3. A non-reductionist theory of social science: TMSA

Standing on his ontological position, Bhaskar faced a form of dichotomy prevailing in theories of social science. The problem of dichotomy was diagnosed as rooted in reductive attitude: either reducing agency to structure or *vice versa*. Bhaskar refutes three types of social theory for committing such fallacy: Weberian voluntarism, Durkheimian collective determinism and Berger's

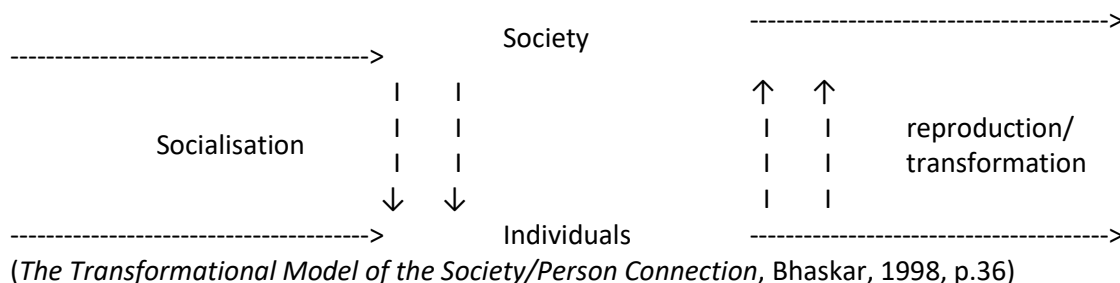
dialectical connection of these two types.⁴⁵ Against those reductive failures, Bhaskar sets out a fourth model by establishing naturalism of social necessities of agency and structure and synthesising them in the way of irreducible relationality. He calls this model a 'transformational model of social activity' (TMSA, henceforth). Human agency is characterised with a kind of natural necessity, viz. intentional mind (acting on reasons with causal efficacies), while social structures, although they are concept- and human activity-dependent, always pre-exist before people and are necessitated by their relative endurance, making them irreducible to human agents (Bhaskar, 1998, p.34). Bhaskar draws necessities from the extremes of voluntarism and determinism, by attending the ontological distinctiveness of each. In contrast to positivism he draws the transfactual and conceptual-dependence of social reality, while in contrast to hermeneutics he sustains the intransitivity (relative endurance) of both beliefs and meanings, but also their susceptibility to scientific explanation, and hence to critique. Together they constitute a spiral moment in the process (pp.21-22); 'neither individual nor society is a "thing" which can stand alone. In the absence of society there are no individuals, in the absence of individuals there is no society' (Dean et al., 2005, p.10). In their constant relations, 'people, in their conscious activity, for the most part unconsciously reproduce (and occasionally transform) the structures governing their substantive activities of production' (Bhaskar, 1998, p.34). So the relationship between human agency and society has a dual character. As Bhaskar explains:

⁴⁵ As a brief introduction to the three types:

The first, described by Bhaskar as a voluntaristic 'Weberian stereotype' sets up a distinction between society and the individual and considers the former to be the unintended consequence of the free activity of the latter. The second, described as the 'Durkheimian stereotype' of 'reification', begins with the same distinction but views the individual as the outcome of a necessary encounter with society. In the first case, the causal arrow runs from individual to society; in the second case, from society to individual. In both cases there is a reductive logic at work: with voluntarism, society becomes a kind of accidental artefact of individuals' free activity; with reification (or determinism) the individual becomes an artefact of society. A third dialectical model which is intended to avoid both of these extremes, is, from Bhaskar's point of view, a failure because it encourages both voluntaristic idealism in relation to the understanding of social structure and a mechanistic determinism in relation to the understanding of individuals. (Dean et al., 2005, p.10)

[S]ociety and human praxis must possess a *dual character*. Society is both the ever-present *condition* (material cause) and the continually reproduced *outcome* of human agency. And praxis is both work, that is, conscious *productions*, and (normally unconscious) *reproduction* of the conditions of production, that is society. One could refer to the former as the *duality of structure*, and the latter as the *duality of praxis*. (p.35, emphasis original)

Bhaskar provides the following diagram of the constant relationships described in his TMSA:



Let us consider Bhaskar's TMSA from the point of agential centredness. We see in TMSA a synthesis of two different types of explanation. Bhaskar's claim of ontological hiatus between people and societies renders not only their mutual irreducibility but also the need for two different kinds of explanation, appropriate to each. However, though synthesised in a way that consists of dual character, each type of explanation in TMSA retains difference from the other by keeping its peculiarity in response to its *explanandum*.⁴⁶ So Bhaskar insists that one type of explanation is limited and marginal for the explanation of the other, otherwise it will fall short of reductionism. In spite of their difference, however, as Collier points out, the two types of explanation are analogues because:

people and societies look in many ways analogous. Both are structurata whose powers are explained by their structure; both have a *conatus* to persist in their being;

⁴⁶ The Latin term *explanandum* means the thing to be explained, while *explanans* means that which explains (Hartwig, 2007, p.193).

both are laminated structurata with a material 'base' and a spiritual 'superstructure' (ideology, mind). (Collier, 1989, p.103, emphasis original)

Now we can argue that TMSA is itself an extended version of agential-centred explanation, while acknowledging that it takes as its *explanandum* complex relationality, which as an emergent reality may contain moments of the non-agential. It is composed of the two types of explanation of people and societies. Each type of explanation finds the causal powers from the intrinsic structures and persistent *conatus* in its *explanandum*; each of the components (people and societies) of TMSA is explained in terms of its intrinsic structures and *conatus* which make the component agential for itself, as seen in transcendental realism.⁴⁷ This indicates that the two types of explanation composing TMSA are analogues in terms of their characteristic agential-centred form of explanation. More importantly, the fact that TMSA is composed of the two different but analogous explanations indicates that TMSA is a higher level explanation than the first two types. The synthesis of societies and human praxis in terms of a dual character can be seen as an intrinsic nature of the complex relationality, composed of the two agential components. Thus the complex relationality should be conceived as an emergent reality that has dual character as its intrinsic nature; it can be partly explained by agential movement of each of the components, but cannot be wholly explained in these terms because there might be emergent property in the complex relationality, remaining independent of, hence irreducible to, those agential-centred components of people and societies.⁴⁸ The emergent property of the complex relationality, as argued above, is a proof of the pre-existence of the non-agential moment before or outside of the agential movement of either component. Therefore it can be said that TMSA, from its intrinsic dual character, is itself an agential-centred

⁴⁷ For example, in accounting for human agents, the explanation should take 'agent-talk ... about desires, purposes and intentions, about means and ends, success and failure, and ... unconscious wishes, repression, displacement, sublimation' but the other explanation, 'in accounting for the way societies are reproduced/transformed by human actions' should use quite different concepts, like 'forces and relations of production, exploitation, classes, base and superstructure, accumulation, crisis, etc.' (Collier, 1989, p.92).

⁴⁸ Collier explains the independence of 'relation' from any specific subject by using wind as a metaphor for relation; 'wind is "a process without subject" ... there is no concrete agency that produces the wind; it is caused by a *relation* of inequality between atmospheric pressures' (Collier, 1989, p.78).

explanation; at the same time it is conceived as an emergent reality that signifies the existence of the non-agential moment to the agential inner or lower components.

This non-agential moment is a kind of indeterminable moment in the sense that the agential movement of reproduction (of structures) or conditioning (or constraints upon human agents) may slip away or lose its significance; rather it is open space where a new change becomes a possibility. For Bhaskar it would be the moment where transformation (that is emancipative in nature) of structures begins; for Collier such transformation is not necessarily commenced at the level of structures, but rather from groups, because 'structures can only be transformed by collective action on a scale adequate to the structure', which is evoked first by certain groups that are 'consciously formed by its members in order to realise some common aim' (Collier, 1989, p.106); for Levinas, as will be seen in the next chapter, the non-agential moment is the moment of birth of ethics. By facing the other, ethics becomes the very pulse or causal power of goodness, so that it may drive human intentional consciousness towards social transformation and emancipation (Levinas, 2007; 1991). Crucial to note here is that the non-agential moment is conceived necessarily in relation with change, but it is ethical change, including social transformation. More importantly, with regard to the very place of the non-agential moment, it is arguable that it happens in relation between people, not between people and structures; or, according to Levinas, the place is the face-to-face relation. Whether it is between people or in the face-to-face relation, the non-agential moment requires the other as the condition of its possibility, and the (ethical) significance of the moment seems only to be captured in the personal relation of human agents with the other. Thus, if human agency, as Bhaskar states, is necessarily 'the last instance' of social life 'via its intentionality' (Bhaskar, 1998, p.34), then human agency should be considered as the way through which meaningful transformation can come to social reality as a whole, alongside production and reproduction. However, this raises the question of whether such meaningful change by agents contains the necessary dimension of 'the non-agential moment', and whether it acknowledges the necessary condition of 'the other'. Therefore, if the non-agential moment is the focus of our concern in regard

to Bhaskar's ontology, then it is crucial to take account of how he postulates human agency on the ontological ground. In order to examine whether Bhaskar's theory signifies the non-agential moment, we must focus on his theory of the human agent.

1.4. Human agency and its powers: Acting on reasons in freedom

From his standpoint of transcendental realism, Bhaskar explores natural necessities of human agency. He argues that the intrinsic powers of human agency are of mind, which in turn is characterised by reasons as causal powers for action in freedom. He argues that human mind as intentional agency is an emergent property out of a certain kind of physiological matter but irreducible to that matter; he then provides a general theory that explains causal relations of human agency with society (Collier, 1994, p.115). For him, to sustain the concept of human agency 'it must be the case that we are responsible for some but not other of our actions'. Those actions are analysed as intentional since they are caused by reasons. Carrying forward the transcendental realist thesis he defines human agents in terms of their 'intrinsic tendencies and powers', which are reasons for acting. He argues that reasons must be interpreted as causes because a real reason is a necessary condition for actions that purpose to make a difference in states of affairs. This indicates that reasons can be regarded as causal efficacy (Bhaskar, 1998, pp.92-93).

How then can reasons be construed as causes? Bhaskar provides explanations of how reasons can be causes in the social sphere in three steps: (1) in social life a lever or a generative condition itself is a cause for things to happen, and (2) the second-monitoring powers of the mind are also causes, because through them we can supply reasons for action. The human agent has powers to rationalise reasons (to act in a certain way with expectation of causal efficacy in states of affairs) through negotiation in dialogue and coherence with the rest of the agent's behaviour. (3)

States and dispositions may properly be causes since the *possession* of a reason can be conceived as a result of a more or less longstanding disposition or orientation to act in certain ways. Thus generative conditions, the second-monitoring powers of mind and longstanding disposition (or states) of agents are constitutive parts of reasons as causal powers for certain actions of human agents (p.93).

It should be noted however that Bhaskar makes a distinction between reasons and action, each of which operates in ontologically different levels. While regarding belief and desires as a sort of reasons, he then completes his naturalism human agency by drawing ontological distinction between beliefs (as reasons), wants and action. This distinction is rooted in the transcendental realist understanding of reality. According to Bhaskar, reasons as a longstanding disposition or orientation to act in certain ways work in the *real* level while action is assigned in the actual (physical) level of the world; reasons are prior to and manifested by actions: 'Reasons, then, are beliefs rooted in the practical interest of life. And a person's essence consists just in what she is most fundamentally disposed to do (or become); it is the set of effective beliefs that determines her psychic (and behavioural) identity, and fixes her in her particularity as a kind' (p.96). In this naturalism of human powers (intentional mind acting on reasons), reasons (beliefs) correspond to tendencies possessed (the real level; implicit), wants to tendencies exercised (the actual) and action to its manifestation (empirical level) in the physical state of the world whether or not the want is realised (p.95). Thus reasons are 'possessed even when unexercised, and only exercised under suitable conditions'. This indicates that reasons are in normical condition so that they have to be analysed as *tendencies* (pp.92-93, emphasis original). Since the conception of normical condition denotes transfactual quality of mechanisms (tendencies), when applied to human agency it means that reasons as tendencies are characterised with transfactual quality, existing at the real level but working through all other levels of the actual and the empirical.

Now let us turn to Bhaskar's theory of action, since action is also a crucial feature of human powers. Action of agents is analysed as intentional, since it is caused by reasons. Bhaskar makes a distinction between intentional action and accordion effects of action; there might happen things other than what we intend to do in a series of actions.⁴⁹ Thus there might be no single correct description of action in open systems, 'but there is always in principle a correct decision in principle as to whether a piece of behaviour is an action or not', viz. intentionality (p.82). This concept of action presupposes 'freedom' of agents in an open world; to say that an agent could have acted otherwise means that the agent 'is only *free* to the extent that s/he is capable of realising his or her real interest (which means knowing, acting on and bringing about a state of affairs satisfying them)', though not all actions are free (p.114).⁵⁰ Moreover, freedom of agent in acting with reasons presupposes the capacity of second-order monitoring (or reflective monitoring): the capacity to refer to its own states of consciousness. Thus a person's activity can be characterised as praxis since praxis consists of two dialectical stages: (1) reasons as causal intervention in the natural and (2) reflective monitoring of one's own causal intervention and monitoring the monitoring of one's activity (pp.81-82).⁵¹ Thus reasons and freedom to act are powers specific to the human agent, and make it possible for her to have relations with society; reasons causing intentional actions involve beliefs and desires to which tendencies of deeper structures of the society are linked, or reflected consciously or unconsciously whether they 'can exist unexercised or be exercised unrealized'. Such reasons belong to 'the causal order, cohabit and interact[s] with other causes in the open system of the world' so that they are explicable in terms of deeper strata of the social world, although they are irreducible (Collier 1994, p.155). Therefore, according to Bhaskar's theory of human agency, human agency can be explained by its transfactual intrinsic powers of reasons: 'human agent acting on reasons in

⁴⁹ Using other terms he distinguishes between perlocutionary action (what is done *by* a human agent) and illocutionary action (what is done *in* an action) (NP, p.83). As will be argued later, this distinction is limited in the sense that it does not take account of what happened by 'others'.

⁵⁰ This sense of freedom of agent indicates a distinctive character in social science, whereby the human agent is conceived as having the possibility of genuine self-determination, though subject to constraints in open systems of the world (Bhaskar, 1975, p.111).

⁵¹ This is 'intimately connected with our possession of a language, conceived as a system of signs apt for the production and communication of information' (Bhaskar, 1998, p.82).

freedom', and at the same time, according to his theory of TMSA, the human agent is the site of 'transformation' of the society.

1.5. A Reflection: Agential-centred explanation and the problem of the other

In the previous chapter, it was shown that Bhaskar's transcendental realist ontology is characterised by 'being-centredness', since it is first and fundamentally anchored on what is *real* of a thing at the real level and how it behaves. In other words, it is established on the basis of concepts of normically qualified properties (tendencies of mechanisms) of a thing and its causally agential character. Such 'being-centredness' was argued to have four ontologically characteristic features: (1) The primary mode of being is 'implicit'; (2) What is implicit is the intrinsic 'properties' of that being (3) That renders the logical processuality of 'being to becoming' (realisation of what is implicit); and (4) The process of realisation is dependent on its circumstances in the open world. Those characteristic features are also found in critical naturalism, particularly in the account of human agency. First, Bhaskar argues that reasons of mind as a longstanding disposition or orientation to act in certain ways are tendencies, distinct from wants and actions, so that they are normically qualified; reasons determine a person's 'psychic (and behavioural) identity, and fix her in her particularity as a kind' so that they are what could be called 'a person's essence', which fills and drives mind with certain intentionality in actions that may or may not be exercised at the actual events of actions according to intervening circumstances (Bhaskar, 1998, pp.95-96).⁵² Thus, as normically qualified tendencies, the primary mode of reasons (the essence of oneself) can be said to be 'implicit'. Furthermore, this ontological characteristic seems also to be found in his tentative theory of SEPM

⁵² Although the point here is the primary mode of being as 'implicit', it is worth mentioning in advance another particularly important point that will be properly explored in the next chapter when the philosophy of Levinas comes under discussion: to see a person from its 'essence' and to understand that essence as intentionality. As will be argued, Levinas critiques the traditional Western ontology for its essentialism of being (for the fundamental 'interestedness' in itself) which violates or kills the others. Although this is not the case in Bhaskar's ontology, its 'being-centredness' (and 'agential-centredness') seems to result in making the other 'secondary'.

(synchronic emergent powers materialism). By understanding emergence in synchronic principle, an emergent stratum is conceived such 'that it could have existed from all *eternity*' implicitly until it emerges in actual form (Collier, 1994, p.156). Such theory of emergence supports the argument that things (beings) exist primarily in the mode of being 'implicit', then come to a form.

Second, once reasons are understood as tendencies then they should also be understood as possessions of the agent as a person. Although a person's reasons are conditioned by society from the moment of her initial disposition and arrangement into that society, there is also distinctiveness of personality which cannot be reduced and exhausted by society.⁵³ Reasons should be considered as not only socially conditioned but as personal construction; hence the second characteristic feature of critical realist ontology is approved as the case in critical naturalism, since reasons (tendencies) are 'properties of' the human agent as a person.

Now, the third characteristic feature of critical realist ontology, viz. the directionality of being to becoming, is also true of critical naturalism. With the secondary monitoring powers and intentional reasons, human action is defined as praxis (Bhaskar, 1998, pp.81-81). Thus, being conscious of her own reasons a person's activity is fuelled and driven by the inner causal powers of reasons (intentions or wants constituted out of reasons) to certain ways to realise them while interacting with her circumstances so that the person may become the one who she essentially is, though constrained or enabled in the given situation. This process reveals the point that critical naturalism, by understanding a person from her essence, is characterised by an ontological feature of processuality (directionality) of 'being to becoming'.

⁵³ Though constituted socially and historically, the human agent cannot be exhausted by historical and structural explanations of society. What makes the human agent ontologically distinct from and irreducible to structures is the fact that the human agent is *a person*. Bhaskar's conception of person is derived from the stratification of mind: person is defined by the articulation of a psychic (non-material cause or power as indicated in SEPM); a psychic is defined by the stratification of reasons (beliefs); and the depth stratification of reasons, together with the vertical integration of purposes, defining a project) from circumstance, constitutes the stratification of mind (Bhaskar, 1998, p.112). Thus a person is conceived as *having* dual components or predicates (non-material and material including beliefs), working continually with its circumstance in pursuing projects for life (Bhaskar, 1998, pp.81, 112).

Finally, the fourth feature of transcendental realist ontology is also true of critical naturalism: the process of ‘being to becoming’ of a person is dependent on her circumstances. In *Realist Theory of Science*, Bhaskar provides two concepts of cause: one is the laws of a thing as causal agent and the other is the sufficient condition (Bhaskar, 1975, p.252). In the same way he provides two concepts of cause in *Possibility of Naturalism*: reasons as the cause and circumstances as the condition. In the continual relation with her circumstance, the human agent is capable of realising her reasons through negotiation in dialogue and coherence with the rest of her behaviour (Bhaskar, 1998, p.93). In that process her circumstances may work as enablements or constraints (Archer, 2003).

Table 2.1. Four characteristic features of being-centredness in TR and CN

Transcendental Realism	Critical Naturalism
(1) ‘Implicit’ as the primary mode of being (2) Tendencies as ‘properties’ of being (3) Processual structure from ‘being to becoming’: a process of realisation (4) Dependence of the realisation-process on ‘circumstances’	(1) Reasons (tendencies) as primarily ‘implicit’ (2) Reasons as ‘properties’ of a person (3) Realisation of a person’s reasons through actions or internal conversations (4) Circumstances of a person as enablements or constraints to the realisation

In addition to the four characteristic features, there are other points to be addressed as signifying critical naturalism as an agential-centred explanation in relation with the other person. Bhaskar’s account of the natural necessities of the human agent is established by two dialectically linked stages: (1) reasons as causal intervention in the circumstances, and (2) reflective monitoring of one’s own causal intervention and monitoring the monitoring of one’s activity,⁵⁴ which presupposes the capacity to refer to its own states of consciousness⁵⁵ (Bhaskar, 1998. pp.81-82). But

⁵⁴ This is intimately connected with our possession of a language, conceived as a system of signs apt for the production and communication of information (Bhaskar, 1998, p.81).

⁵⁵ This is because ‘any entity x that lacked the capacity to refer to its own states of consciousness (and to interiorize references to itself in the third person) could not use those states of consciousness for the production and communication of information, and so could not be said to possess a language. Conversely any x which could so use its states of consciousness must possess the capacity to make its own past and anticipated states of awareness the present objects of its awareness. Such reflectivity over time would seem, then, to be a necessary condition for any discursive (non-intuitive) intelligence.’ (Bhaskar, 1998, p.82)

by defying mind with such reflective capacity *the other is always placed in the 'past' tense* as an object of its reflection; the other is already experienced so that genuine sense of the presence of the other is not possible; the other is only presented to the consciousness of the reflective agent. To define mind as reflective, intentional and causal is to define the human being as the master of her consciousness while placing the other as an object of reflection, who has already been experienced and now comes under reflection. In that identification the reflective self comes to the centre, *acting in the present tense* while all the others becomes objects of reflections of that agential master, *existing in the past tense; the others cannot be co-present* except in a 'reflected' form. If one defines a human being with such agential mind, and sees her only from this agential position, then all the others would be always in a past tense.⁵⁶ However, if we turn our sight the other way, it can be seen that there is moment of 'coming' of the other to oneself and there is no way to attribute such a moment of 'coming' to the agential or intentional mind of oneself. It is simply the coming of the other, a non-agential moment for oneself. But it would still remain in the agential-centred (or being-centred) mode to say that there *'were'* those moments. This means that the intentionally, consciously and reflectively ascribed mind is limited in the sense that it is unable to signify a non-agential moment caused by the other. Though it is still possible to speak of the other within the agential parameter in terms of the past tense, however they are already comprehended and coloured by my intentional mind; and moreover, within the parameter of the agential totality there would be no genuine (or radical) sense of 'otherness'. For Levinas, to understand a person only by the self-interested (in her reasons) reflective mind is to ascribe her as *Totality*, in contrast to the *Infinity* that transcends the intentional mind of the *I* in the moment of the present tense of the other. But in most cases, the other is already placed in the parameter of agential powers in the past tense. This is very much an agential-centred explanation. Therefore, to see a being from its agential powers

⁵⁶ Similarly, Archer, as an ally of critical realism, also understands human agency as taking the crucial role in social relations for the capacity to mediate social structures through internal conversations (Archer, 2003). In this case, structures (as a form of the other) are understood as activity dependent in the past tense. As a longstanding construction, structures have their own causal powers and come into play as enablements or constraints in an agent's internal (reflexive) conversations, but do not determine agency in the present tense (Cruickshank, 2004, p.576) since the reflective mind is the master of her present time.

is to *explain* that being from the point of the causally agential (autonomous) powers possessed by that being. In the case of the human agent, it is to explain her first and primarily in terms of her capacity to be autonomously agential in freedom whilst recognising her ever-existing conditionality (materially or socially). It is what 'agential-centredness' means by, derived from 'being-centredness' of transcendental realist ontology, in that the question of 'non-agential' is subsided, nonetheless. Such agential-centredness presupposes the primacy of the 'I' (the agential 'I' initiative), which seems to result in putting the circumstances (including other persons) as secondary, placed in the past tense (as what the I experienced) so that they have to be brought back into reflective mode by the active agent: more simply, the subside of the significance of 'non-agential' and the conception of the other person as in the past tense and secondary.

Based on transcendental realism, Bhaskar has established the intrinsic tendencies of the human agent on the natural ground. The natural necessities of human agents, like all other kinds of natural necessities of different kinds of being, are not static; rather they are dynamic and responsive; they move and vibrate from inside and realise their intrinsic tendencies as much as is possible in relation with the circumstances. This is an agential-centred explanation of the human agent. Although this form of explanation takes account of the relationality of human agents with the circumstances (whether structures or other people), the explanatory stance of the relations is given to the agential action of the human being on reasons; relation is *of* the human agent. But the non-agential moment, considered as a happening outside of intentional action, does not seem to be taken into account, and as a result the significance that the non-agential moment would bring cannot be grasped. If ethics takes its birth in the non-agential moment, as will be argued later with Levinas, then the latter point will be a serious remark on Bhaskar's theory of ethics and ethical agent. Keeping this point in mind, we turn next to Bhaskar's *Dialectics*.

2. Dialectics

2.1. Bhaskar's dialectical turn and MELD

We have discussed the first stage of critical realism in terms of its characteristic of agential-centred explanation. In discussing Bhaskar's dialectical turn we will continue to explore the question, 'is agential centredness persistent here or is there increased significance of the non-agential moment?'

The original critical realism (transcendental realism and critical naturalism) stresses the central role of 'being (ontology) ... in our understanding of how knowledge (epistemology) is possible' in terms of the causal powers of natural necessities in natural and social beings. To take a being's essence and the ways of being as the ground of possibility of knowledge is sometimes termed by Bhaskar 'the reality principle'. So, it is a form of explanation that takes being as central (Norrie, 2010, p.7), called here an agential-centred explanation of being. But the agential-centred being should not be understood as static or confined in itself. Rather, it is dynamic and characterised by change; change not in the sense of Plato's difference but of a *real* change. Thus, having established his philosophy on ontology of being, in his dialectical turn Bhaskar's major task is to explain the real change of being to becoming.⁵⁷

Here, one should note that the third characteristic feature of being-centredness of transcendental realism shown in the above table should not be considered as the simple process of realisation of what is implicit in being, as in a case where the focus and possibility are given entirely to being itself, or a case that is eventually concerned with the realisation of that being in spite of those negative constraints; or as in a process in which identity is achieved in its totality through

⁵⁷ At the outset of his *Dialectics*, Bhaskar indicates the three objectives of the book: 'the dialectical enrichment and deepening of critical realism', to develop a general theory of dialectic through engagement with critical realism, and to outline 'the elements of a totalizing critique of western philosophy' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.2). With the discovery of the concept of absence or negation which renders dialectical exploration of 'being to becoming', Bhaskar is able to take these three objectives in his dialectical work (Hartwig, 2007, p.26).

dialectical course. This type of process is a typical form of Hegelian dialectics of thought, not the real dialectic, which consists of three elements: identity, negativity and totality (p. 12).

It starts with the identity in a concept or a thing, that which makes it itself, *this* thing in distinction from something else. It shows how criticism of that identity leads it to fall into contradiction, but then how the contradiction can be resolved and identity restored in a further move to a higher level in Hegel's thought system. Hegel thus starts with *identity*, submits it to a *negative* critique, and then shows how the results of this *negativity* can be addressed when viewed in the context of the whole, the rational *totality*. Identity, negativity and totality are thus the three terms of the Hegelian dialectic and the drive is to secure identity against the results of negative critique by viewing them from the perspective of (rational) totality. (Norrie, 2010, p.12)

Contrary to Hegel, Bhaskar's dialectics has four terms: non-identity, negativity, totality and praxis (or agency). Thus Bhaskar's dialectics begins,

as its 'first moment' (abbreviated to 1M), with the sheer, real difference that exists in the world (what he calls *non-identity*). He then moves to what he calls a 'second edge' (2E) of real *negativity* and contradiction that things in the world disclose. He locates such negativity in the world at the 'third level' (3L) of real, open, unfinished whole (his version of *totality*) and then stresses the importance of a 'fourth dimension' (4D), the capacity for practical human *agency* to change the world. (Norrie, 2010, p.12)

Brought into an ontological-axiological or causal-axiological chain, those four terms comprise four degrees or stadia of Bhaskar's dialectic critical realism, which he calls MELD. Among them 1M and 3L are especially affinitive to causal powers (transfactual powers and holistic causality), while 2E and 4D are so to the exercise of those causal powers (transformative negation and agential praxis). But in their development, 'each successor presupposes or preservatively sublates its predecessor: 4D

> 3L > 2E > 1M'. Important to note is that '2E is the hub of this chain' because the key concept at 2E, negativity or negation (absenting absence), is what drives and unites 'the whole circuit of 1M-4D links and relations' (Hartwig, 2007, p.296). Hartwig provides a brief introduction to MELD with their central concepts:

Moment signifies something finished, behind us, determinate – a *product*: *transfactual* (structural) *causality*, pertaining to *NON-IDENTITY*; *first is for founding*. *Edge* speaks of the point of transition or becoming, the exercise of causal powers in *rhythmic* (processual) *causality*, pertaining to *NEGATIVITY*. *Level* announces an emergent whole with its own specific determinations, capable of reacting back on the materials from which it is formed – *process-in-product*: *holistic causality*, pertaining to *TOTALITY*. *Dimension* singles out a geo-historically recent form of causality – *product-in-process*: human *intentional causality*, transformative AGENCY or praxis. (pp.295-296, emphasis original)

In his move on to dialectics Bhaskar was aware of 'a longstanding and deep-seated mistake in western philosophy: ontological monovalence, which takes purely positive account of reality while the negative underplayed so that it is unable to say the genuine sense of change or becoming, a real negation of subversive or transformative change (Norrie, 2010, p.14). This is a philosophical legacy that can be traced back to Parmenides, whose notion of reality was 'a purely positive, complementing a purely actual' (Bhaskar, 2008, pp.4-5). This purely positive and actual notion of reality was bequeathed to Hegelian dialectic, which starts with identity, 'a concept of a thing, that which makes it itself, *this* thing in distinction from something else' (Norrie, 2010, p.12 emphasis original). It is the second and third movements of the Hegelian 'understanding-dialectic-reason triad' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.21) that submits identity or understanding to a negative critique and then addresses the results of the negativity under the light of the rational totality. The driving force in this dialectic is 'to secure identity against the results of negative critique by viewing them from the

perspective of (rational) totality' (Norrie, 2010, p.12). This Hegelian totality is 'constellationally closed', a theory of 'an achieved identity' (Norrie p.24) through rational reason. Contrary to Hegel, Bhaskar starts his dialectic from non-identity as real and sheer difference that exists in the world independently of our understanding of it. Non-identity is a kind of natural necessity, as it is associated with the 'necessary stratification and differentiation of the world', and with 'causal powers and generative mechanisms' (Bhaskar p.392). Non-identity as sheer difference in the world is what is entailed by transcendental realism with transfactual quality and is the starting point of Bhaskar's dialectic, called first moment (1M) of dialectical critical realism.

But crucial to note here is that non-identity involves real determinate absence as a kind of causal power that exists in things as part of their natural necessity. We can see a development from original CR in the way that it takes natural necessities into the thought of how being can be understood in terms of its processuality, or change, and how philosophy can explain what ties being to becoming, that is, 'the inevitable, ontological processual quality of being'. Bhaskar finds the ground of processuality in the ontological feature of real determinate absence, which necessitates the process of negation as absenting absence since 'becoming is the absenting of what was in favour of the emergence of what now is' (Norrie, 2010, pp.13-16). Hence, negativity at 2E is basically the process of absenting of the absence found in 1M.

Then, what is absence? Absence is the pivotal category in Bhaskar's theory of dialectics: 'If Bhaskar's earlier work revindicates ontology, *Dialectics* revindicates negativity' (Hartwig, 2007, p.9). Bhaskar conceives absence with a product/process bipolarity, which is retained in all stages of the dialectical movement (his MELD), issuing different types of association of them to each stage: '(1) *product* (simple absence) [at 1M]; (2) *process* (simple absenting) [at 2E]; (3) *process-in-product* [at 3L]; and (4) *product-in-process* [at 4D]' (Hartwig, 2007, p.9, emphasis original). While absence at 1M is identified with the primary meaning viz. 'real determinate absence or non-being (i.e. including non-existence)', Bhaskar argues that absence should be conceived not only with the primary meaning but

also with its connotation to 'a process of mediating, distancing or absenting' as more or less determinate⁵⁸ as the primary absence. This process is articulated in terms of transformative negation working at other stages as absenting absence (Bhaskar, 2008, pp.5-6).⁵⁹ Transformative negation is explained as the key to social dialectics, of which a special case is radical negation as the pivotal concept in self-emancipation (Hartwig, 2007, p.6). Transformative negation is basically a process of absenting absences. For example, hunger is a real determinative absence (absence at IM), so absenting hunger is a transformative negation. But I may be hungry out of the inability to provide for myself due to my unemployment and my unemployment may be a result of my incompetence or of economic crisis in society. Here radical negation comes into play either as a form of self-critique of individual incompetence or as a form of social, economic, or ideological critique of the economic crisis; both are aimed at and essential for transformation, hence eventual self-emancipation. Thus the real absence, like biological hunger and structural crisis in society, is part of natural necessities qualified its determinate causal power of change through transformative negation, particularly radical negation.

To understand being in terms of non-identity and negativity does not mean that the processuality of being is a kind of arbitrary movement. There is another principle or level, called the third level of totality (3L), in which all things mentioned previously are integrated and constellationally related into a holistic causality. Thus totality is itself an internal system 'which may assume various forms of intra-activity and operate via holistic causality' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.405).

⁵⁸ Unlike and against Hegelian dialectic where the real, the transformative and the racial negations are all identified, resulting in a linear self-generating process, e.g. the unfolding of the concept in the *Logics* (Bhaskar, 2008, p.6), for Bhaskar each of them is considered as determinate alone in making difference, and as a result the process of dialectics can be diffracted at any level. With the concept of diffracted dialectics Bhaskar is able to set dialectic on the critical realist ground rather than the Hegelian idealist, linear dialectics. For a detailed introduction to Bhaskar's diffracting dialectic see Norrie, 2010, chap. 3.

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However, it is a diffracted totality open to change entailed by negativity and real negation. Even the thinking of an entity of totality is involved in the make-up of the totality. Concerning this diffracted but internally related, unfinished nature of totality, Bhaskar distinguishes two types of totality: partial totality and sub-totality. Sub-totality, linked to the idea of detotalisation, denotes the site of 'discontinuities, hiatus, spaces, binds, barriers, boundaries and blocks between totalities', while partial totality as the broader term includes not only sub-totality but also both the necessity of thinking totality and the impossibility of thinking its completeness in an open, diffracted world (p.126). Therefore 'the only plausible concept of a totality is that of a *partial totality*' in which elements and structures co-determine each other causally so they become co-constitutive of the whole (p.270, emphasis original). Through such causality, called holistic causality, all the four degrees (1M-4D) are linked; in Bhaskar's words, 'partial totalities operate in conditions of social stratifications, emergent rhythmicity, multiple binds reflexivity, openness and transformative agency'. The human agent is understood as an emergent, partial totality situated in constellational relations.

Peculiar to the idea of totality is the derived idea of individual human agency as 'concrete singularity'. Situated in the middle of constellational relations 'concrete singularity consists in a core species-being, particular mediations and rhythmicity, uniquely individuating her or him as in effect in a natural kind *sui generis*' to its related totalities (p.395). This concrete singular or individual in a multiply conditioned world is a 'four-planar social being' or social cube, a notion that encompasses his or her multiple relations at different levels: the levels of the material, other people, social structures and its own stratification of personality (Norrie, 2010). In this sense, the individual planes are seen as 'embodying all the moments of the concrete universal' (p.160). Although agents are thrown in the world, they can act rationally in their conditions; they act where they are, out of their four-planar concrete singularity (p.117). Bhaskar calls this judgemental rationality, through which ethical practice becomes a real possibility to human agency. This is why he considers the concrete singular as the very condition of freedom and abolition of human heterology. He states that,

our totality ethically prioritizes the individual – the concrete singularity of each is the *condition* for the concrete singularity of all – while recognizing the determining role played by material circumstances (including, of courses, ideas), particularly in the form of structurally sedimented institutions interlocked with discursively moralized oppressive power₂ relations. (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 273)

Let us turn finally to Bhaskar's theory of ethical agency at the fourth dimension. But, as the linking point to the next chapter it needs to be considered in a separate section.

2.2. Ethical agency: Dialectical rationality and ethical alethia

Bhaskar argues that the human agent and her participation in the totality of the world are fundamentally and naturally ethical. How could this be so, and how far can it be justified?⁶⁰ Fundamentally what makes a human being an ethical agent is her dialectically constructed ethical rationality or simply dialectical rationality. For Bhaskar, a human agent is naturally capable and acts on the dialectical rationality, although limited or constrained in any given situation. A possible structural explanation of the dialectical rationality starts from Bhaskar's conception of constellationality, developed in relation with his notion of totality.

To designate the relationship at the level of Bhaskar uses the term constellationality. Constellationality is an '*over-reaching* term to denote a figure of dialectical containment' between, for example, epistemology within ontology or reasons within causes, some of which 'may be diachronically or synchronically emergent' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.395). What is peculiar to this notion of constellationality is a kind of constellational relation, i.e. constellational unity, which is distinctively

⁶⁰ The section will answer to how Bhaskar assigns human agency as ethical agency, but the question about its justification will be addressed both in the conclusion to this chapter and in the following chapter.

distinguished from (Hegelian) constellational identity where other things, sheer difference or heterology, are subsumed to the idealist identity. Bhaskar calls this constellational containment, or constellational closure. But in contrast, he supports the more open idea of constellational unity, where there is co-constitution between epistemology and ontology, between dialectical and analytical reason, between reasons and causes or mind and matter and between human beings, where '[m]utual intra-action and co-mediation in a constellational state ... is stressed' (Norrie, 2010, p.100). One characteristic of constellational unity is that it is only possible through human rationality by its dialectical use. For example, in the case of the duality of structures and agency, Bhaskar maintains heterology (sheer difference) between them by arguing for what he calls the hiatus, or hiatus-in-the-duality, which denotes a gap or moment of discontinuity between them but because of which reductionism is avoided. However, human agency has an ability to switch between two different perspectives, what Bhaskar calls perspectival switch. 'Perspectival switch is rendered valid and necessary by virtue of the need to see things from both sides in a dual or constellated relation' (p.103). Bhaskar argues that the possibility of perspectival switch leads the human agent to have reflexivity on her broader context up to what Bhaskar calls a meta-reflexive situation where, for example, a kind of stalemate is found in which 'both sides accuse the other of self-referential paradox' (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 147) but they can have a way out of the stalemate through 'the concept of a meta-reflexively totalising situation - another dialectical perspectival switch in the key of constellationality' (p.273). Put more simply, the human agent, through his ability of perspectival switch, can place himself in another's shoes, reach to understand another's situation and make (trustworthy) judgement of betterment for others' freedom, and others' concrete singularity, just as he does for himself. Thus the concept of constellationality is crucial for Bhaskar's ethics because with this relationality he can argue for the possibility of perspectival switch through which one can be in ethical relation with and for the other in the form of solidarity.

One can notice the stress on the human capacity for thought, expressed here as reflexivity taking the mediating role from my perspective to that of the other, and also as the extensional or

processual quality of ethics from my freedom to the freedom of the other. This is the key aspect of dialectical rationality or ethical dialectics. As Bhaskar argues:

Ethical dialectics will take us, via ethical naturalism and moral realism, from the primal scream induced by the absent parent(s) through (to use slightly archaic language) the education imposed on desire by the reality principle or axiological necessity, in a dialectical of truth and freedom, mediated by wisdom to universal human emancipation in a society in which the free flourishing of each is the condition of the free flourishing of all. Absolute reason or dialectical rationality, alethia, theory/practice consistency and dialectical universalizability impose a tendential directionality to this rhythmic absencing of constraints on wellbeing and possibilities. (p. 98)

Here we can see a dialectical logic or rationality of ethics. It starts from the primal existential situation of the human being, like the primal scream of a baby at the separation from the mother's womb, which constitutes desire or need that is fundamentally absence of something else (such as parents, separation, loving touch or safety). The desire or need is governed by necessity but at the same time it pushes the human being to freedom from the needy situation by absencing absence. Thus searching for freedom is our first desire, viz. desire to freedom. Now, over the course of constellational relation which renders people capable of perspectival switch, the human being is able to sympathise with the needy situation of the other. Here we can see another existential component of ethics, viz. solidarity: a desire *for* freedom. This is a process of dialectical logic or rationality that 'proceeds from our first desire to be free from material need to an eventual desire by extension for freedom of a most complete form' (Norrie, 2010, pp.121-122). What we can see is an extension from freedom for oneself to freedom for the other and for all. Thus Bhaskar argues for the possibility of ethical universalisability (universal human emancipation), the starting point of which is the ethical concrete singularity, often expressed in terms of eudemonia society, 'a society in which the free flourishing of each is the condition of the free flourishing of all' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.98).

This ethical realisation, however, is contingent, since it is dependent upon human agency. That is why Bhaskar argues for the need for education: ‘the education imposed on desire by the reality principle or axiological necessity, in a dialectical of truth and freedom, mediated by wisdom to universal human emancipation in a society’ (p.98). Of course, education here is a broad term that indicates the need for effort and struggle *for* freedom in a right way; the human agent needs to be informed and guided by objective values that Bhaskar calls ethical alethia. Bhaskar claims for objective values, stating that:

As a moral realist I hold that there is an objective morality. But how can it be known? This is where ethical naturalism comes in. It lies in the *transition from fact to value* (and theory to practice). So there is an ethical alethia, ultimately grounded in conceptions of human nature, in the context of developing four-planar social being, with the moral consciousness of the species in principle *open*. (p.211)

The above statement indicates the fact-to-value formula as the starting point of Bhaskar’s ethical naturalism. In fact the formula itself is drawn from his theory explanatory critique. Elder-vass, in his critical study of Bhaskar’s ethical naturalism, provides the following seminal statement about explanatory critique, which he found in *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*:

Let a belief P, which has some object O, have a source (causal explanation) S. I am going to contend that if we possess: (i) adequate grounds for supposing P is false; and (ii) adequate grounds for supposing that S co-explains P, then we may, and must, pass immediately to (iii) a negative evaluation of S (CP);⁶¹ and (iv) a positive evaluation of action rationally directed at the removal of S (CP). (Elder-vass, 2010, p.35, opt. Bhaskar, 1986, p.177)

The adequate ground for supposing a belief as false is to make factual statements of it. The production of factual statements about ideas and beliefs that we have and live by is the work of the

⁶¹ CP in the text is ‘*ceteris paribus*’ meaning ‘other things being equal’.

social sciences. Therefore, such sciences always have critical potential, because in making factual statements they pose 'the questions of the causation and function of an idea together with that of its truth or falsehood, in such a way that the causal accounts show why we tend to have certain kinds of false belief' (Bhaskar et al., 1998, pp.385-386). Whenever we can show falsity of a belief from factual statements of it, and expose 'a prevailing social structure as an important causal factor in sustaining the prevalence of this false belief', this is immediately followed by negative ethical valuation of the belief and the structure (Hartwig, 2007, p.197). Here we can see the fact-to-value formula; as Dave put it, 'whenever we can show that P is false (a fact), then this provides all the grounds we need to say that P is wrong (a value) and so is any action based on P' (Elder-vass, 2010, p.35). Bhaskar calls this work explanatory critique that produces critical knowledge so that it can 'expose not just false beliefs, but the false beliefs by which oppression and injustice are disguised, whether consciously or not, and perpetuated' (Bhaskar et al., 1998, p. 389). Thus explanatory critique is taken as essential to transformative negation, not only in the sense of cognitive explanatory critique, but extended to a 'needs-based explanatory critique' so that it can do absenting absence in the real world (Elder-vass, 2010, p.36). Hence it becomes an imperative for universal emancipation (Bhaskar et al., 1998, *ibid*). From this position Bhaskar moves on to claim ethical naturalism not in the sense of Platonic ideas or Kantian noumenal, but in the sense of naturalistic, intransitive, objective value that is discovered in the real world that we all inhabit (p. 389). Here the holy trinity of critical realism can be equally applied: the transfactual quality of morality or ethics does exist so that it makes possible our access to it (ontological realism) through explanatory critique. However, because of our limitedness in time-spatial, geo-historical condition (epistemic relativism), our knowledge of morality should be always subject to refinement through rational judgement (judgemental rationalism) in order for us to be true, as much as we can, to the ethical real. This whole process requires us to be committed to truth: alethic truth or alethia including ethical alethia.

Here we reach the final point before we move to make the concluding remarks of this chapter. The point is about alethic truth. Although it is the last point, it is no less important than any other, because the idea of alethia may be the most fundamental to critical realism and, if so, it may be the kernel to which all our concern regarding the agential centredness of critical realism and the question of the non-agential moment are attributed. In fact, as Bhaskar acknowledges, alethia is ‘the second great discovery’ in his dialectical work ‘after the adequate concept of absence’ (Hartwig, 2007, p.26). The basic idea of alethia is truth of a being, not a propositional truth as in the Kantian sense that humans bring truth to the world; rather it is truth that the world imposes on us: ‘it is true to, for, in and of itself’, hence ‘contingently true knowledge of the world is not only possible, but also an AXIOLOGICAL necessity. Thus Bhaskar’s idea of alethia is ‘identical to the REALTY PRINCIPLE or epistemologically mediated axiological (natural) necessity’. Although epistemologically mediate and recursively discovered it is not necessarily justified by the realist way because it goes beyond the ‘real’; it is not necessarily confined truth at 1M degree, but also goes beyond this, in the sense of its very original and ultimate teleological meaning. The last point can be understood more easily in the light of Bhaskar’s later, tentative claim, which as Hartwig points out is without evidence, of meta-Reality as the alethia of all beings (pp.26-29, emphasis original); all beings are already therein eternally before they come to be real, the idea that we have seen in SEPM, or put another way, as meta-Reality, the alethia is ‘implicit’ in all beings, guiding and setting beings on tendential directionality toward emancipation:

The ultimate *moral or ethical alethia* of the human species is universal freedom.

This is not a causal claim immediately, but a claim that such a goal (*alethic morality*) logically is implicit at the level of the real in human discourse and practice. ... However, our NEED for freedom is a form of axiological (natural) necessity, and tendential DIRECTIONALITY toward such a goal is a causal process (since reasons, norms, etc., are causes) whereby directionality is inscribed in the struggle for freedom by the REALITY PRINCIPLE, i.e., alethic truth. (p.29, emphasis original)

Therefore, for Bhaskar the human being is an ethical agent in a dual sense: in the sense of alethic truth, the human agent is ethical since the ultimate ethical alethia is inscribed in her being implicitly from the outset. At the same time, in the realist sense, in spite of all the possibility of split, hatred, contradiction, absence, etc., the human agent is capable not only of desiring freedom for herself from limited situations but also of desiring for freedom of the other by the ability of perspectival switch and through the exercise of absencing absence (transformative negation). Moreover, the ultimate ethical alethia as the inscribed goal sets implicitly the tendential directionality of the agent's life of four-planar social relations toward universal emancipation. That is why Bhaskar can say that, 'the project of universal emancipation may be implicit in every free action' of the human agent (Bhaskar et al., 1998, p.389).

3. Concluding Remarks: A lacuna – the dimension of otherness

We began this chapter with the question of whether the agential-centred explanation of reality is persistent in Bhaskar's explanation of social reality, particularly his explanation of the human being. To answer this question, we have taken into account Bhaskar's critical naturalism and dialectic. Our reading of his critical naturalism, particularly in *Possibility of Naturalism*, has shown that the form of explanation of social beings (structures and people) and their relationship (TMSA) is also characterised with agential centredness. Paying particular attention to the account of the human agent, because of its peculiarity as the site of transformation of society, the chapter has shown that the ontology of the human agent has the same pattern of characteristic features as that of natural things, and has pointed out that this gives rise to the question of the non-agential moment. Our reading of *Dialectics* has shown that Bhaskar deepens the critical naturalist account of human agency by establishing the human agent as ethical agent in the dialectically changing world of reality through an ontological-axiological chain in which absence and alethia come to take a pivotal role. However, the chapter has not yet answered the question, 'is agential centredness persistent in *Dialectics* or is the non-agential moment is greased here with its significance? In these concluding remarks we will answer that question in the following five points.

First, Bhaskar's dialectics can be seen as sharing the fundamental character of agential-centred form of explanation. Based on the four characteristic features of agential centredness given in Chapter One, it can be said that alethia is 'implicit' in all being as the primary mode of being; the causal powers at 1M (natural necessities) and 3L (the holistic causality) are 'properties' of being and totality, respectively; the process of transformative negation (absenting absence) at 2E and 4D as exercise of ethical agency under the tendential directionality inscribed in the agent signifies the directionality of 'being to becoming'; and the circumstance is understood in terms of the constellational relation through the four planar social levels (the material, other people, the structural and personality), rendering a partial (open) totality (conditioned but not exhausted by

ever potential for freedom). Preserving the key characteristic features of agential centeredness rooted in and generated from transcendental realism, therefore, Bhaskar's *Dialectics* can also be seen as explaining the dialectical nature of reality from the stance of agential centredness, as seen in the table below.

Table 2.2. Four characteristic features of Being-centredness in TR, CN and Dialectics

Transcendental Realism	Critical Naturalism	Dialectics
(1) 'Implicit' as the primary mode of being (2) Tendencies as 'properties' of being (3) Processual structure from 'being to becoming': a process of realisation (4) Dependence of the realisation-process on 'circumstances'	(1) Reasons (tendencies) as primarily being 'implicit' (2) Reasons as 'properties' of a person (3) Realisation of a person's reasons through actions or internal conversations (4) Circumstances of a person as enablements or constraints to the realisation	(1) Alethia as primarily 'implicit' in all beings (2) 1M non-identity and 3L totality as 'properties' of being (3) 'Being to becoming' through exercise of real negation at 2E and 4D (4) Constellational relations (including perspectival switch) with circumstances

Moreover, Bhaskar's *Dialectics* is an agential-centred explanation particularly in the sense that the pivotal concepts of absence and alethia should be seen as what make the dialectical movement of reality agential movement. Both concepts are essentially connected with agency. Let us consider the concept of absence. The usage of the concept in *Dialectics* is dualistic: absence as noun and absenting as a verb form. The first denotes what is absent in beings, hence it is real determinate absence in being so that it necessitates the second, verb form of absenting. So let us say that I am hungry: the hunger as a form of absence pushes me to take action to absent the hunger (transformative negation). In doing so I am assigned as agency of the action for myself. This is obviously natural and necessary for a human being. Not only in this moment, but in all stages of the dialectical process is my agency present; from the prime existential moment of an infant's cry for the absence of parents to the pursuing of universal emancipation in solidarity with the others; from desire of my freedom to the point of desire for others' freedom; from the very first natural judgement of absenting absence for my freedom to the ethical judgement of absenting absence for

the other's freedom. Agency is always present in the process. Thus dialectics is fundamentally seen from, and articulated for, the agential-centred explanation. Alethia makes the argument stronger. Let us talk about hunger again. Absenting hunger is natural. But for Bhaskar, it is not only natural but also 'true' to alethia of being. All our judgements that we make in the process of transformative negation may be necessary, but are also true to the factual situation of the context. This does not mean they are eternally true, because of the time-space and geo-historical conditionality of the judgement in the context. They may be necessary to the context but may be contingently true and in need of continual subjection to further investigation when necessary. What this denotes is that there is alethic truth beyond the 'real' truth that we find in the context that we inhabit. Thus when Bhaskar says that the world is an open totality this is not only because of the ever present absence in the world, but also because of the fact that the ultimate alethia implicit in all beings does not render the world to be closed within its absence but pushes it to seek continually for freedom from absence. What makes this possible is the agency. The alethic truth or alethia, according to Bhaskar, is inscribed in agency from the outset, so he calls the agency a 'radically transformed transformative praxis'.⁶² Therefore, *Dialectics* is all the more an agential-centred explanation of reality; but this time it is conceived not only as the agency of being, but also as the agency of alethic truth.⁶³ As Bhaskar states:

We are left with non-identity, structure, negativity, finitude, essentially transformative change, holistic causality and phronesis at the end – in agency. But agency is, of course, in a sense already there at the outset in the phenomenologicality of science, so we can say, if we like, that the end is implicit in the beginning, but if we go along with this rather Hegelian way of speaking, we must see the agency as a *radically*

⁶² Below in a critical analysis, the phrase, 'radically transformed transformative praxis', however, is taken as a hint that indicates the non-agential moment.

⁶³ Thus one might say of THE AGENCY of alethic truth, and Bhaskar's latest work of meta-Reality would be the case.

transformed transformative praxis, oriented to rationally groundable projects – ultimately flourishing in freedom. (Bhaskar, 2008, p.9)

Second, however, serious challenges might be made to this account of agential centredness. To counter those challenges we should start from the very pivotal concepts of Bhaskar's dialectics: absence and alethia. We have noted the dual usage of absence, as noun and the verb form. Now each usage needs to be further specified: as the noun form, for example, between my hunger and the other's hunger; from this specification it is possible to specify the verb form as absencing my hunger or absencing the other's hunger. Now we can say that absencing my hunger is *natural* and necessary to the agent; hence it is an agential movement from the outset. But it is a different story if I take the bread out of my mouth to give to the other in order to absent her hunger. That is *ethical* but not necessarily natural to the agent. The fact of my hunger necessitates my agential movement of absencing it, but the fact of the other's hunger does not naturally necessitate my ethical action of absencing her hunger, particularly when both are desperately hungry. We should distinguish between the two types of absencing: one is natural and necessary, hence agential to the agent, but the other is not necessarily natural movement to the agent. In the former case of absencing, freedom is necessarily presupposed for the agent, so the absencing absence for freedom of itself is *natural and spontaneous*; but in the case of the latter, absencing absence for the other's freedom at the expense of my freedom is not natural to the agent. It is a special case that should be called ethics. So the distinction between two types of absencing signifies the distinction between freedom and ethics. What makes the distinction is not what the absence is, but *whose the absence is*. It is *the other* who is irreducible to my freedom from the outset; so we say, it is *otherness of the other*. From this point therefore it can be said that ethics cannot be accounted as natural necessity as freedom, nor is it considered as naturally necessitated freedom. Ethics is different from natural kind.

Third, if ethics is not necessarily generated from freedom, then Bhaskar's dialectical logic also faces a challenge. It has been shown that Bhaskar's ethics has its dialectical logic or rationality,

which starts from the primal existential situation of absence in oneself: desire to freedom for survival of oneself. Then, through the ability of perspectival switch, gained from constellational unity with the other, one can be in solidarity with the other, pursuing more than my freedom, toward freedom for the other (Norrie, 2010, p.123). Bhaskar takes freedom and solidarity as two sides of ethics, then considers that the latter can be concretely developed by dialectical reflective agency through perspectival switch. So we can see a kind of extensionality of ethics that could be regarded as a sort of 'tendential directionality' (Hartwig, 2007, p.29). Moreover, Bhaskar seems to consider the directionality as implicit in all beings so that somehow it should be natural and true to the agency. Again, this is a thoroughly agential-centred explanation of ethics: seeing ethics from the position of the agency, explaining it from the reflectively extensive agency and, more importantly, claiming the agency as the source of ethics for the implicit ethical alethia in all being. According to the last point, then, all agencies should be somehow naturally ethical. But as argued above, ethics is a special kind, not a natural kind like freedom; it may be dialectically constructed as Bhaskar said, but it is not initiated by the agent's spontaneous action. Furthermore, grounding the possibility of ethics on the human agent's ability of perspectival switch means that ethics is dependent on each human agent (the concrete singularity in Bhaskar's term): in his words, 'the free flourishing of each is the condition of the free flourishing of all' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.98). However, this could make ethics an option or 'opinion' (Levinas, 2007, p.47), which in turn makes the exercise of freedom prior to ethics, because of its selecting role between options. Again, the point is that to pursue freedom is natural and necessary to the human agency (for oneself) as Bhaskar claims; but to pursue ethics (for the other) is not natural to the human agency because, if it were so, the agent should *necessarily* take such an ethical switch from the outset, or in other words, the agent should give the bread out of his mouth to the other from the first. Therefore, it can be said that Bhaskar's dialectical rationality, with its developmental or extensional understanding of ethics, shows the primacy of freedom over ethics; that is, ethics may be optional.

This renders the fourth, and crucial, point that ethics as a special case should be considered as distinct from freedom, particularly in regard to the origin of ethics. According to Bhaskar, ethics seems intrinsically related with freedom, as seen from his dialectical logic or rationality of ethics: my existential experience of freedom will eventually entail my agential ethical praxis for universal freedom. In this case however, as argued above, ethics always remains as an option or opinion, dependent upon my spontaneity. Contrary to this, it is argued here that ethics is a kind distinct from freedom, so that it does not pertain to freedom, hence it is not opinion or optional. When it is said that ethics is not opinion, nor optional, it does not mean that ethics always exists somewhere, waiting to be discovered. It means that *ethics is a command from the other*, not my agential opinion or understanding of the other's situation. *It is prior to my understanding from the perspectival switch. It comes first.* This indicates that something *happens* to the agent *prior to* its agential movement for its desire. It is because something has already happened to the agent that the agent can give the bread to the other against its freedom. This agent would be the '*radically transformed*' praxis (Bhaskar, 2008, p.9), meaning that something has happened *prior to* the agential movement so that the agent has been transformed radically.⁶⁴ According to Bhaskar's own theory, happening is distinct from action. While action is attributed to the agent's intentional movement, happening is considered as something outside the agential parameter (Bhaskar, 1998, p.82). Happening as outside of intentional actions is thus conceived as the non-agential moment and, as argued in the previous chapter, the condition of the possibility of the non-agential moment is the other who comes to the agent in direct encounter⁶⁵ or, in Levinas term, as will be seen, the face-to-face encounter. Thus, if something had happened to the agent that has made him radically transformed, and if this

⁶⁴ When it is said that ethics is prior to the agential movement this does not necessarily mean it is the prime existential experience that is, as we have seen, natural. But when we say that an agent is ethical (radically transformed) it means there something has happened to the agent so that he has been transformed ethically.

⁶⁵ In the previous chapter, it was argued that some minor points of Bhaskar's early book (Bhaskar, 1975) can be actively interpreted as providing a sense of what 'non-agential' would be like: it would be in the mode of moment (event) caused by extrinsic circumstance; the 'non-agential' is a moment (event), not an intentional action but a moment of happening caused only by the other beings (other than my agential being). Here, a crucial point is that the existence of the others is the necessary condition of the 'non-agential moment', so that the non-agential happening is only possible by the 'coming' of the other prior to my agential reflection upon it.

transformation is truly ethical rather than spontaneous choice, there must have been happening in the non-agential moment of encountering the other. This indicates that the birth place of ethics is not in the agential being itself (if it were, it would become a kind of natural necessity), nor in the agent's dialectical movement (although it will be constructed as ethical rationality in the movement after the birth⁶⁶), but in the moment of encounter with the other. Therefore, while Bhaskar finds the origin and the possibility of ethics from ethical alethia implicit in all beings,⁶⁷ and agents' freedom⁶⁸ in the concrete world of reality, it is argued here that ethics cannot be conceived as originated in such agential movement of oneself, but is only possible in the face of the other, who is irreducible to my agential centredness and whose otherness is ultimate alterity to which my freedom should be subject, otherwise it has to be subject to my freedom. Ethics is, therefore, somehow contrary to freedom. What makes difference is the other.

Finally, therefore, this distinctiveness of ethics from freedom renders the argument that the concept of 'the other' should be considered as categorically distinct from the general usage of being (or human agency). As has been argued, the non-agential happening is only possible by 'coming' of the other prior to my agential reflection upon it. To conceive the other as the necessary condition of the 'non-agential moment' demands that we distinguish the concept of 'the other' from the concept of agential being. In Bhaskar's account there is no such distinction between the I agent and the other; rather they are all categorised into one concept of human agency. It is true that I am an agent of my own and the other is also an agent of her own. But the category at work here is not genuine distinction between the I and the other, but homologous concept of the agency (hence it is an agential-centred form of explanation). But if we take seriously the significance of the non-agential moment, that is, to uncover the distinctiveness of ethics from freedom, or in other words, its causal effect of the birth of ethics, then the other as the very condition of the moment should be

⁶⁶ This point of argument will be presented in the following chapter.

⁶⁷ In this case, each agent is conceived as an agency of the ethical alethia in its time-space, geo-historical specific context. Thus it is fundamentally a form of agential-centred explanation.

⁶⁸ Here the agent's freedom is an inclusive usage that includes transformative negation, which in turn includes explanatory critique entailed in the fact-to-value formula that renders ethical naturalism.

considered as a distinct category in social life. Therefore, the other is not simply another agent like me; she is also the other person who, by coming to me, may give to me a birth of ethics, which is impossible by my agency alone.⁶⁹

How can ethics be described in its outset, and what would be its significance? These questions will be explored in the following chapter, through a reading of the philosophy of Levinas. First, however, it should be said that there are some points in Bhaskar's theory that adumbrate the possibility of the non-agential moment. For example, his phrase about agency, 'radically transformed transformative praxis' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.9), could be understood as meaning that the agency had already had the non-agential moment of facing the other, and has then been radically (ethically) transformed so that he may give the bread out of his mouth to another at the sacrifice of his freedom. But the accentuation of agential centredness has meant that Bhaskar's CR has seemed not to give attention to, or to have been unable to give attention to, the non-agential moment and its significance; accentuation of the agential dimension has had the effect of attenuating the seemingly ontological distinctive dimension of otherness of the other. This dimension is called here a lacuna in critical realism, and it needs to be articulated in a proper way; a philosophy is needed for underlabouring this dimension. In the next chapter we will explore the possibility in Levinas's philosophy of the other.

⁶⁹ This form of argument would be consistent with what Bhaskar calls philosophical ontology that is to delineate content of shape of the ontology of subject, Bhaskar, 2000, p.22; 26), with the role of philosophy as producing knowledge of necessary condition of the production of knowledge of a science (Bhaskar, 1998, p.8) or with the categorial and dispositional realism, establishing 'contingently necessary constitutive truths of the world, i.e., the general contours of ontology' (Hartwig, 2007, p.28).

Chapter 3 Otherness

Introduction

In previous chapters it has been argued that Bhaskarian ontology has a characteristic feature: agential-centredness. In his transcendental realist ontology being is understood as agential for its own intrinsic tendencies or powers. Hence his ontology is characterised as an agential-centred explanation of being. In Bhaskarian ontology, particularly when applied to social reality, the categorial distinction of the other person or otherness (alterity) of the other seems to be dissolved into the category of agential being. This led us to remark that his ontological realism, including his dialectical turn, although it was initiated by concern about the alienation of the other (of the underdeveloped countries), has resulted in attenuation of the significance of otherness by the accentuation of agential (actively relational) agency of being. The category of agential being has become the explanatory framework of social ontology at the cost of the distinctive category of otherness;⁷⁰ the very concept of otherness (absolute alterity) has lost its significance by being dissolved into the parameter of agential being. This raises a sequence of questions: Is it possible to conceive otherwise than being-agential, or the non-agential moment? Is it possible to say about the real *the other* or alterity of the other? What significance would otherness have to Bhaskarian ontology? Could it fill the lacuna in the ontology?

⁷⁰ There are elements in Bhaskar's philosophy that could be seen as indicating distinctiveness of otherness, for example his concepts of alterity as a form of real negation and of concrete singularity; the former as indicating pure otherness and the latter as indicating distinctiveness of each being. However, in both cases he did not attend sufficiently to the significance as otherness. Instead, he seemed to move on to explain how they are 'related' in the dialectical process, in that, again, the agential active role of agent is taken as central.

In seeking to answer these questions, we bring to the fore the philosophy of Levinas. Levinas is known as a philosopher of four cultures;⁷¹ as a stranger to a country and one who suffered as a war hostage he himself could be called the other. Levinas's philosophy is often called a philosophy of the other, in which he seeks to describe the significance of the other in the midst of the world of totality, where the same or the ontology of the same rules its mastery power in its freedom. By confronting Heideggerian ontology in particular, he puts the same aside and opens the path to infinity, which is concretely experienced in the encounter with the face of the other, the exteriority, in the non-agential moment; the path where ethics is born in the face of the other who brings my freedom into question, whose significance my agential movement cannot capture. The non-agential moment is a breach of agential being; the very moment where alterity of the other comes to pass; the genuine moment of transcendence that leaves a trace in the agential being, viz. ethics. In this chapter, therefore, we will read Levinas with particular reference to the non-agential moment and otherness. This reading will provide us with three points of argument: (1) a critique of agential-centred explanation, (2) the placing of otherness within the structure of Bhaskarian ontology, and (3) a presentation of the significance of otherness for critical realist ontology, particularly in terms of otherness and ethical subjectivity.

1. An Overview: The lived immediacy

Putnam describes Levinas's philosophy as a big idea, using an image of a hedgehog who knows one big thing rather than a fox who knows many small things (Critchley et al., 2002, p.8). Derrida⁷² calls it an ethics of ethics, since 'Levinas does not seek to propose ... moral rules, does not

⁷¹ Born in Lithuania into a Jewish family, deeply inspired by German philosophy but living most of his adult life in France, he is called a philosopher of four cultures.

⁷² The work of Levinas was first introduced to the English speaking world by Derrida, particularly in his essay on Levinas, 'Violence and Metaphysics' (first published in 1964, later included in his book, *Writing and Difference*), which remains 'unsurpassed in its analytic acuity' (Bergo, 2011). The work was received first by some philosophers from a Christian background, then by others from different disciplines, such as those seeking for

seek to determine *a* morality, but rather the essence of the ethical relation in general [that] ... is an Ethics of ethics ... an Ethics without law and without concept, which maintains its non-violent purity only before being determined as concepts and laws' (Derrida, 2004, p.138).⁷³ Exploring an ethics of ethics is, for Levinas, to seek 'conditions of possibility of any interest in good actions or lives', or the origin of ethics, in that he attempts to describe the rise and repetition of the face-to-face encounter with the other human person (Bergo, 2011). This encounter is an event or relation at the precognitive level, that is, before the work of comprehension of being or before ontology begins.⁷⁴ For Levinas, ethics proceeding ontology as the first philosophy where 'ethics is understood as a relation of infinite responsibility to the other person' (Critchley et al., 2002, p.8). In his view, the event is itself ethical so that it renders the birth of subjectivity, not in the sense of being master of its own but in the sense of being responsive to the other, being subjective to the other in a 'continuum of sensibility and affectivity' (Bergo, 2011). Such a responsibility defines human being first as ethical subjectivity before she becomes an active agent of its own being. In that sense Levinas's philosophy is a 'defence of subjectivity' (Levinas, 2007, p.26), far from the modernist sense of ego-subjectivity that Descartes inscribed into modern philosophy, but rather an ethical subjectivity, which is born in the face-to-face with the other. Thus Kang calls his philosophy a philosophy of face of the other or an apology of subjectivity in the sense of ethical subjectivity (Kang, 2005).

The face-to-face encounter as an existential event at the precognitive or the pre-intentional level means a moment of lived immediacy; it is a lived immediate before being mediated by consciousness through conceptualisation; before the distance from the other is filled by the mediation (Levinas, 2007, p.44). This lived immediacy is claimed as the locus where alterity of the

an ethics of deconstruction and those with an interest in the place of ethics in literature. Levinas's influence is also found in feminist discourses, analytic philosophy, American pragmatism and in anthropology and social science as an imposing profile for ethics in those fields. For a more detailed discussion of Levinas's influence, see, Critchley et al., 2002, pp. 1-5.

⁷³ As such, Levinas's ethics is not in the sense of traditional discourses of ethics. As Bergo points out: 'If ethics means rationalist self-legislation and freedom (deontology), the calculation of happiness (utilitarianism), or the cultivation of virtues (virtue ethics), then Levinas's philosophy is not an ethics' (Bergo, 2011).

⁷⁴ As will be seen below, the ontology concerned here is Heideggerian ontology, of which Levinas makes a fundamental critique from the position of priority of ethics.

other human is experienced, and the moment that transcendence comes to pass before such alterity, the distance, is absorbed into the same. It is not a moment of knowing the other; rather it is a moment in which the other signifies himself to me. Therefore, Levinas's exploration is an effort to describe both the meaning and the signification of the lived immediacy and how the I and the other come to the moment. It is in this moment that transcendence, existence and the human other are found, together with their significance for an agential being.⁷⁵ And it is the moment that adumbrates an answer to our central question of what the non-agential moment would be like.

How then, does Levinas describe this immediacy? He began his philosophical journey by adapting the phenomenological method from his principal teachers, Husserl and Heidegger,⁷⁶ but extended their approach in a unique way. Following Husserl, he took phenomenological reduction because it enabled him to go beyond the unreflective naivety, beyond the empirical givens of sense data toward the scientific search for 'the *a priori* structures that give meanings to those seeming givens'. However, while he maintained the phenomenological method, he was not substantively committed to it because the intentional analysis of Husserlian phenomenology, based on the mastery work of transcendental ego, cannot grasp the significance of the other (footnote for transcendental ego from Bergo note). This is because 'the other is not a phenomenon but an enigma, something ultimately refractory to intentionality and opaque to the understanding' (Critchley et al., 2002, pp.7-8).⁷⁷ With the suspicion of excessive intellectualism of Husserlian phenomenology, Levinas turned to Heideggerian ontology, which takes a worldly approach to the concrete; to *a priori* structures of 'Dasein' (human being), which is called 'existential'. This is a fundamental ontology that seeks to grasp the existential engagement of human being with things or other people in her rich variety of intentional life, including emotional, practical and theoretical life;

⁷⁵ Bergo points to transcendence, existence and the other human as three themes that shine light on Levinas's exploration of lived immediacy (Bergo, 2011).

⁷⁶ Heidegger succeeded Husserl as holder of the chair of philosophy in Freiburg in 1928 (Levinas, 2001, p.viii). For a brief account of the dynamic of attraction and repulsion of Husserl for Heidegger see, Wheeler, Michael, 'Martin Heidegger', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2011 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/heidegger/>>.

⁷⁷ For Levinas's exploration of enigma, see, 'Enigma and Phenomenology' in *Basic Philosophical Writings*.

it is itself 'an act in which we consider life in all its concreteness' or an analysis of the factual situation of human being.⁷⁸ In this ontology, things or others are understood through the existential relationality of Dasein with them. Thus, in order for such ontological truth to be possible it is presupposed to understand *a priori* structures of being, that is, the existential horizon of that being, upon which things and others appear and by which they are comprehended (p.9). This was the advantage point of Heidegger over Husserl which allowed Levinas to grasp human being in its variety of intentional life through concrete existentials.

However, Levinas left Heidegger's climate of thinking when the teacher turned to National Socialism, a move that was traumatic for Levinas and, to some extent, deterministic for his future work, with its shift from fundamental ontology to the first philosophy of ethics (p.8).⁷⁹ Facing the deeply disturbing question of how a brilliant philosopher like Heidegger could have become a Nazi in such a short time, Levinas noticed the danger in the philosopher's ontology: 'the danger in all this is that the philosopher risks losing sight of the other person in his or her quest for ontological truth' (p.13). Heidegger's ontology of Being was, for Levinas, an ontology of faceless Being (Kang, 2005, p.77).⁸⁰ Thus at the kernel of Levinas's philosophy was the critique of this faceless ontology, which he terms totality, and his description of the way out of it, the face-to-face encounter with the other as a lived immediacy that brings forth ethical subjectivity in its response to the other before its ontological grasp of the other in its horizon of comprehension.⁸¹ His unique path from ontology to

⁷⁸ After Wilhelm Dilthey, Heidegger calls this factual situation of human being 'facticity' (Critchley et al., 2002, p.9).

⁷⁹ Levinas himself suffered the Nazi horror as he was captured by the Nazis and imprisoned in *Fallingsbotel*, a labour camp for officers. During the war, his Lithuanian family was murdered (Bergo, 2011).

⁸⁰ Levinas critiques western philosophy for its tendency to de-personalise or reject personhood of human being by reducing individuals to a medium of history (Hegel, Marx), a modality of God or nature (Spinoza), or a part of structure or system (structuralism), which is deemed as bringing a consequence of discourse of death of human or death of subjectivity. Heidegger seems for Levinas the most representative of his time. Against this Levinas's works, together with those of Michael Polanyi, are regarded as exposing the tendency of the faceless thought (Kang, 2005, pp.76-77).

⁸¹ Although Levinas had a paper to write on Heidegger, 'Martin Heidegger and Ontology' (Levinas, 1996), which appeared in fragmentary form a year before Heidegger joined the Nazis in 1933, he abandoned the project. However, in 1951 he wrote an important essay on his ethical critique of Heidegger, 'Is Ontology Fundamental?' (Peperzak et al., 1996), where the term 'ethics' appears with its significance for the first time in his philosophy (Critchley et al., 2002, p.10).

ethics was therefore his way to reveal the ethical significance of ontology from the moment of encounter with the other. This is well brought out in his mature works, *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. Particularly in the second book, he sought to describe the way in which to live out the ethical significance of the immediate relationship with the other in the course of one's life, or, in his words, how the saying can be said in spite of the necessary betrayal. Here we find his description of ethical subjectivity living out its ethical rationality. Compared with Bhaskar's ethical agency living out its dialectical rationality, one can see how the ethical significance of the other makes a difference to the ethical life of the responsible subject; it is the difference that is made, in our terms, when our stance of seeing the world is changed from the agential-centred mode, where freedom is the first principle, to the non-agential mode where ethics is the first principle. Let us start from Levinas's critique of ontology and his description of the ethical significance of the lived immediacy.

2. Critique of Ontology and the Non-Agential Moment

Why was ontology so troubling for Levinas?⁸² With the reflection of his time, Levinas declared that ontology dominated by the search for surpassing of being deserves to be called barbarous.⁸³ In particular, he was suspicious of Heidegger's ontology featured in *Being and Time* for its possible links with the barbarianism that he himself had suffered (Levinas, 2001, pp.ix-x).⁸⁴ For Levinas the faceless ontology, by losing sight of the other, seemed to provide a philosophical ground for identifying human being with the place of surpassing in terms of the spontaneous movement of

⁸² Before proceeding further, it should be mentioned that 'ontology' here is Heideggerian ontology, not the critical realist ontology of Bhaskar. However, the fundamental critique of the losing sight of the other can be applied to both. Hence Levinas's critique of it and his recovering of the face in philosophy may work to fill the gap, or lacuna, of the dimension of otherness that we have found in Bhaskar's ontology.

⁸³ Levinas grasped the value of European civilisation as the search for a way to surpass being, which he considered as linked with the tragic despair and the crimes of the Nazi war (Levinas, 2001, p.x).

⁸⁴ Though Levinas considered Heidegger's *Being and Time* as one of the four or five greatest books in philosophy, he continued to hold the suspicion (Levinas, 2001, p.ix).

Dasein, a movement that is characterised by its power to grasp other beings or entities within its comprehensive horizon.

Let us turn to Levinas's critique of this ontology. Fundamentally for Levinas the projective movement of Dasein is the movement of the same, which Levinas terms totality (Levinas, 2007). Though Dasein meets up with others (entities) so that it may move from one stage to another, what Heidegger terms 'stepping over to' (Bergo, 2011),⁸⁵ this is the operation of a Dasein that *has* already a vague understanding of Being of those others. In Heidegger's words:

We do not even know the horizon in terms of which that meaning is to be grasped and fixed. *But this vague average understanding of Being is still a Fact.* ... What we seek when we inquire into Being is not something entirely unfamiliar, even if proximally we cannot grasp it at all. (Heidegger, 2005, p.25)

The vague average understanding of Being, that is, something that is not entirely unfamiliar with Being, indicates that others have been grasped within the horizon of Dasein, although vaguely, and Dasein's movement is based on this comprehension. This is because horizon for Heidegger is conceived as that 'which provides the limits for certain intellectual activities performed "within" it' (Heidegger, 2005, p.1, see note 4). Working in the vague familiarity within the horizon of the Dasein is the mode of the same. Thus, to say that others are not significant with their alterity to Dasein but they are mediated by Being of them, which is already familiar, though vaguely, within the comprehensive horizon of Dasein, is to affirm that such operation is characterised with the primacy of the same over the other. As Levinas points out:

⁸⁵ Heidegger described the projective element of transcendence in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1982) with the terms 'stepping over to ... as such'. In the work one can see Heidegger's early departure from Husserl's phenomenology, while he retains the priority of Dasein's being-in-the-world for transcendence (Bergo, see, note 13).

This primacy of the same was Socrates' teaching: to receive nothing of the Other⁸⁶ but what is in me, as though from all eternity I was in possession of what comes to me from the outside – to receive nothing, or to be free, (Levinas, 2007, p.43)

This operation of the same, projecting meaning of others within the horizon of the same, is what Levinas calls mediation through conceptualisation, which is characteristic of western philosophy (pp.42-44).⁸⁷ For Levinas, the primacy of ontology is to affirm 'the priority of Being over existents; subordinating the relation with entities (the Other) to the relation with Being'.⁸⁸ It is the role of the same to draw out Being from its vagueness by offering it a third term, like a concept, then to link it with entities; this is called mediation. Thus Being, when comprehended by a third term, mediates the relation with existents to the I who offered that third term. Levinas calls this operation accomplishment, in that '[t]he relation with the other is here accomplished only through a third term which I find in myself'; or surrender, in that 'an exterior and foreign being is to surrender itself to intermediaries' (p.44). For Levinas this philosophy is ontology, since that is his 'general term for any relation to otherness that is reducible to comprehension or understanding' of the same (Critchley et al., 2002, p.11); hence he says, 'Philosophy is an egology' (Levinas, 2007, p.44).

The chief concerns here for Levinas are terror and betrayal. It is terror, as far as other human beings are concerned, that 'brings a free man under the domination of another' who is the

⁸⁶ For Levinas, 'The absolutely other is the Other' (Levinas, 2007, p.39). Here the capitalised Other is the personal other, the you, translating the original French 'autrui', a key term in Levinas's philosophy. For Levinas the other as the breach of totality is human other, the other person; hence the other for Levinas is signified as a widow, an orphan or a stranger, but not God. In his two major works he insists that the other is not god because the concept of god itself is already an idealistic status in human perception of consciousness; it can be an example of idealism as egoism in that the I can endorse meaning upon it according to its interest (Critchley et al., 2002, p.11).

⁸⁷ Levinas's critique of the conception, horizon, can be clearly seen in the following:

To see is hence always to see on the horizon. The vision that apprehends on the horizon does not encounter a being out of what is beyond all being. Vision is a forgetting of the *there is* because of the essential satisfaction, the agreeableness [agreement] of sensibility, enjoyment, contentment with the finite without concern for the infinite. In fleeing itself in vision consciousness returns to itself. (Levinas, 2007, p.191)

⁸⁸ Levinas uses the terms 'Existence and existents' to address what Heidegger calls 'Being and beings'.

knowing;⁸⁹ hence there is a great betrayal because it is a process of depriving existents (the known) of their alterity in order to be mediated within the given mediatory frame (Levinas, 2007, p.44). This terror to and betrayal of the other in the work of ontology is the key point of Levinas's critique, because it is the ground for taking freedom over ethics, the ground that makes a justification of the terror and betrayal.

To affirm the priority of *Being* over *existents* is to already decide the essence of philosophy; it is to subordinate the relation with *someone*, who is an existent (the ethical relation), to a relation with the *Being of existents*, which, impersonal, permits the apprehension, the domination of existents (a relationship of knowing), subordinates justice to freedom. ... In subordinating every relation with existents to the relation with Being the Heideggerian ontology affirms the primacy of freedom over ethics. (Levinas, 2007, p.45, emphasis original)

As already noted, the mercilessness of the war that Levinas had suffered drove his intellectual life into a struggle with the problems of violence and injustice. What he found was that inevitable interconnected features at the heart of western philosophy generate this violence and injustice: freedom, possession and power constituting ontology as the first philosophy (Levinas, 2007, pp.45-46). 'Ontology, which reduces the other to the same, promotes freedom ... of the same, not allowing itself to be alienated by the other' (p.42); the same maintains itself against the other while suppressing or possessing the other through thematisation and conceptualisation. The other can only be retained in the form of possession when it is appropriated within the horizon of the same while being denied its independence, its alterity. In this philosophy therefore "I think" comes down to "I can", that is, I can possess the other within my comprehension. So he argued, 'ontology as first philosophy is a philosophy of power'. In this spontaneous movement, human being for Heidegger is defined as builder and cultivator, for whom freedom is prior to justice, prior to obligation to the

⁸⁹ As for things, they are the generality by which the individual (which alone exists) is apprehended through the work of ontology (Levinas, 2007, p.44).

other (pp.46-47). But for Levinas it is totality that manifests itself in war (p.21) as it always seeks to absorb others into its horizon, which is itself a totalising and synoptic thought system (p.40). Levinas warns that such movement of the same leads to imperialist domination, to tyranny like Hitler's Nazism that he himself suffered. In his words, 'Heideggerian ontology, which subordinates the relationship with the Other to the relation with Being in general ... leads inevitably to another power, to imperialist domination, to tyranny' (pp.46-47). Through its exercise of freedom totality erases the distance between the same and the exteriority by absorbing the latter into the comprehensive horizon of the former. And by erasing the distance the radical alterity of the other is destroyed (pp.33-34).

3. The Non-Agential Moment

Now let us turn to our question of the non-agential moment. Fundamental ontology for Heidegger is characterised with the movement of Dasein in its mode of Being-in-the-world, which is the movement in seeking for ontological truth. Heidegger's explanation of Dasein is therefore an explanation of human being from the point of the spontaneous and free movement of human mind, which can choose ways for projecting its interests. In this sense it has a degree of consistency with Bhaskar's agential-centred form of explanation, particularly when the human agent is concerned. It is worth remembering here that Bhaskar explains reasons as consisting of desires and beliefs, which are first gained from the situation to which agent is disposed and arranged in the pre-existing society. The human agent with reflective capability can act on reasons in freedom in ways that meet her interests. Heidegger's horizon as a limit upon the movement of Dasein can be seen as consistent with Bhaskar's explanation of reasons as limiting agents' action in certain ways according to its reasons and interests. It is crucial that in both cases of ontology the explanatory stance of human being seems to be the agential movement of human being; human being as agent of its innate or inner structures, whether comprehensive horizon or reasons. However, it should also be noted that there is significant difference between them, particularly in regard to the other. While Heideggerian

ontology, as Levinas critiques, reduces the other (an entity) to the comprehensive horizon of the knower,⁹⁰ Bhaskar's critical ontology claims the independence of the other for its irreducible intrinsic tendencies that make possible knowledge of it for the knower. However, the point of argument here is that in both cases, the first principle for explanation is given to the agential movement of being: for Heidegger it is the agential movement of Dasein in grasping the other into its comprehension, and for Bhaskar it is the agential hence causal features of the intrinsic tendencies that make it intelligible. Human being for Bhaskar's case is understood by its agential action on reasons in freedom. Thus, if Heidegger explains relations with the other 'only by' agential movement of human being, Bhaskar's explanation of it 'begins from' the agential movement of human agent. However despite this difference, which is of itself crucial, the agential movement of human being is central to both cases.

Yet the question of the non-agential has not been answered. Just as the question remains open in Bhaskar's ontology, so it does in Heidegger's. It is Levinas who provides an answer to the question. His serious confrontation with Heidegger's ontology allows him to grasp what is not the agential moment, or what precedes the agential moment, that is, ethics, which is brought forth from the non-agential moment in its character. Let us consider the following passage:

A calling into question of the same – which cannot occur within the egoist spontaneity of the same – is brought about by the other. We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other ethics. The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions is accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as ethics. (Levinas, 2007, p.43)

In the world of totality, where the ontological movement of the same as an exercise of freedom remains as fundamental, escape from the same cannot be generated from the same itself;

⁹⁰ So Bhaskar charges Heidegger with anthropocentrism or anthropic fallacy, which is a form of epistemic fallacy, and is fundamental to irrealism (Hartwig, 2007, pp.40-41).

‘it is not an operation of thought’ (p.40). Thus, to ask about the possibility of escape from the same is to ask whether non-comprehensive relation is possible or, in our term, to ask whether non-agential moment is possible. Levinas claims for the possibility. However it is not a movement that the I can make, but a moment or an instant that is possible only by coming of the other, that is, the moment of encounter with the other person. In this sense, ‘the other person is an event I can neither predict nor control’ (Bergo, 2011). The experience of the other in that moment is an experience of breach of totality because the other, who is refractory to my categories and over whom I have no power, disturbs the I with her strangeness and alterity (Levinas, 2007, pp.39-40). This is an experience of transcendence, which Levinas calls infinity.

To claim infinity as the breach of totality is not like turning a coin to the other side. Rather, Levinas points out the structure between two: the precedence of infinity over totality. Inspired by the Cartesian picture of the relation of the I and God, Levinas explains the idea of infinity as that infinity always exceeds the idea of infinity in me. There is always distance between the infinity and the idea of the infinity in me because the former surpasses the latter. And ‘infinity is characteristic to a transcendental being; the infinite is the absolutely other’ (p.49) who cannot be reduced to my spontaneous consciousness; who is ‘preeminently non-adequation and the surplus of being over thought’ (p.27); infinity as transcendence in its expression always comes to pass. Inspired by Descartes but not wholly following his way, Levinas concretises the idea of infinity by replacing Descartes’s god with the concrete relation with the other person (p.50). He explains this by uncovering different layers of Dasein, different from Heidegger’s understanding of Dasein; he claims that ‘*Dasein*’s understanding of Being presupposes an ethical relation with the other human being, that being to whom I speak and to whom I am obliged before being comprehended’ (Critchley et al., 2002, p.10). This primordial relation with the other is more fundamental than my ontological comprehension of it. Here ‘the comprehension of Being in general cannot *dominate* the relationship with the Other. The latter relationship commands the first’ (Levinas, 2007, p.47). A relation exceeding ontological relation of the same is named ethical relation. And an ethical relation

concretely happens in the moment of encounter with the other person who exceeds the idea of the other in me. Levinas calls the way that the other presents himself 'face' (p.50). Ethics in this sense is 'a location of a point of otherness, or exteriority' (Critchley et al., 2002, p.15), and face is what makes it possible to describe the lived immediate.

The notion of the face ... opens other perspective: it brings us to a notion of meaning prior to my *Sinngebung* and thus independent of my initiative and my power. It signifies the philosophical priority of the existent over Being, an exteriority that does not call for power or possession, an exteriority that is not reducible, as with Plato, to the interiority of memory and yet maintains the I who welcomes it. It finally makes possible the description of the notion of the immediate ... The immediate is the face-to-face. (Levinas, 2007, pp.51-52)

The immediate is the moment that the violent grasp of the agential movement of the I is called into question by facing the other. Ethics therefore is the fundamental critique of the agential movement of the I; by questioning its naïve spontaneity while at the same time arousing a desire for infinity, that is, a desire to transcend the finite involvement (embodiment) of the I in the world towards what is desirable evermore.⁹¹ Ethics is in this sense the fundamental critique that makes possible any meaningful (ethical) change of the I.

Now we have an answer from Levinas to the question of the possibility of non-agential moment. By disclosing the nature of the non-agential moment, he tells us more than whether such moment is possible or exists. The answer discloses the significance of the non-agential moment for the agential movement, viz. ethical significance. This moment is in fact a constituent part of ethical agency. Whereas in Bhaskar's critical realism ethics is argued in forms of natural realism, which is disclosed by an agential movement, that is, explanatory critique, for Levinas ethics cannot be an

⁹¹ Levinas often uses the capitalised Desire to refer to a desire for infinity. In the same spirit, he uses the term metaphysics which precedes physical embodiedness or involvedness of the I, stating that, 'Ontology presupposes metaphysics' (Levinas, 2007, p.48) and the face-to-face relation is metaphysical (Levinas, 2007, p.84).

operation of agential movement at the outset; rather it precedes the movement. Face signifies itself before being explained and affects upon us before being conceptualised, not asking to absorb its alterity into the agential comprehension but commanding the agent to act in a certain way to be ethical, otherwise we forget the face; as Bergo points out, '[w]e are always already in social relations; more importantly, we have always already been impacted by the expression of a living other. Because this impact is affective, because transcendence is not conceptualizable, we forget the force the other's expression has on us' (Bergo, 2011). We may forget the face of the other, but fundamentally the moment of face-to-face encounter with the other is itself ethical and the fundamental critique, calling all agential movement, including explanatory critique, into question. From this it can be said that the moment of facing the other is the very ground of any explanatory 'critique' or even the origin of the 'critical' of critical realism, so that it pushes all pursuit of ontological truth to be truthful.⁹² Then what would be produced from the face-to-face? Levinas claims that it is responsibility carried out by ethical subjectivity.

4. Responsibility and the Birth of Ethical Subjectivity from the Non-Agential Moment

Levinas's ethics is itself an event, not an instantiation of an ethical idea (Levinas, 2007, p.199); it is an event of face-to-face encounter with the other from which ethics begins or happens. At the moment of the revelation or expression of the face what is required for the I is not to fix it into my totalising thought, but first to respond to the face. To respond to the other, despite one's totalitarian tendency, is itself the first ethical significance that the I gains in the presence of the other. Levinas calls this *the first teaching* (pp.50, 171), which could lead the I to take responsibility for the other up to the point of being ethical subjectivity. In the Cartesian sense, subjectivity is

⁹² 'Truth and truthfulness' are the cornerstone for Wright in developing his critical realist approach to religious education (Wright, 2007). In Chapter 6, the perspective we gain here will be integrated with his approach.

affirmed by the subject's active and cognitive activities upon the object. Contrary to this, Levinas claims that the true meaning of subjectivity is gained when the subject welcomes the other. It is subjectivity of hospitality that accepts, welcomes and takes responsibility for the other who is hungry, and suffers injustices (Kang, 2005, pp.32-33). In facing the ethical exigency of the other the ethical subject submits to the will of the other and offers its being for the other despite putting itself in pain in doing so. This is moral creation of the I who displaces its centre to the other. But in order for all this to be possible Levinas claims first of all the necessity of the separation of the I from the world. It is here that his description of ethical subjectivity begins.

In fact, Levinas introduces two types of subjectivity: subjectivity of the separated I gained from enjoyment, dwelling and work in the world, and the subjectivity gained from hospitality (pp.40-41). The former is a necessary condition of the latter, and indicates the necessity of the separation of the I from the world (and the other) because without the separation there would be no 'encounter' or 'otherness', hence no 'ethics' at all. This subjectivity is not like Cartesian abstract subjectivity, but is 'a corporeal being of man' (Levinas, 2007, p.175), who is in need and feels hunger and pain.⁹³ The corporeal being has to live by elements that satisfy his need and hunger. But need, unlike Heideggerian anxiety, signifies 'a happy dependence' and capability of satisfaction which gets filled (p.115). Thus, with satisfaction of need, the dependency turns into enjoyment⁹⁴ in that I experience myself as being sovereign for pursuing my happiness, which is essentially egoist without reference to the other: 'In enjoyment I am absolutely for myself. Egoist without reference to the Other, I am alone without solitude, innocently egoist and alone ... entirely deaf to the Other ... like a hungry stomach' (p.134). Enjoyment is to live from elements but not to possess them, because the world of elements is always non-possessable and remains as anonymous and indeterminable; I have no control over the elements but I am in them (p.130). Surrounded and threatened by the

⁹³ In contrast to Husserl, Levinas emphasises the corporeality as prior to intentional consciousness (Kang, 2005, p.145).

⁹⁴ Contrary to Heidegger, who sees life as constituted fundamentally from anxiety, Levinas sees life as enjoyment. So for Heidegger we eat to live (or exist) but for Levinas eating itself is life (Kang, 2005, p.145).

indeterminable elements the corporeal being needs to separate itself from the world of elements; it needs somewhere to sojourn to protect itself. Dwelling of the separated I in a home is the primordial mode of being, which is an ontological event. In Levinas's words: 'To separate oneself, to not remain bound up with a totality, is positively to be *somewhere*, in the home, to be economically. The "somewhere" and the home render egoism, the primordial mode of being ... the corporeal being of man' (p.175, emphasis original). Levinas takes dwelling of the separated I as that which holds up subjectivity because on this ground new forms of relation with the world can be developed: work and possession. By dwelling in home the subject, separated from the threat of the world, has its own place where he is able to represent and control the world; in dwelling the subject of enjoyment turns to the subject of work. And by dwelling and work the subject can now possess elements of the world as things; he can grasp elements then make them 'things' by removing the anonymousness of them and then giving them meaning and functions; by naming them and presenting them to himself knowledge is produced;⁹⁵ they become property. Thus enjoyment, dwelling and work have a dual dimension: they are the process of liberation of the corporeal being from the indeterminable world of elements so that they form interiority and the separated I, but at the same time they are the process of appearance of the totalitarian same to which the indeterminable elements are reduced as things and by which they lose their otherness or alterity by being fixed into concepts or knowledge (Kang, 2005, pp.140-143).

The process of the establishment of the same as totality is not, however, entirely negative for Levinas. He also finds in it positive features. First, the separatedness and dwelling safely in a home is itself an experience of welcome by the other, whom Levinas calls the feminine for her tenderness and warmth. Because of this intimacy with the feminine one can go back home, back to its interiority, then be established as subjectivity. Thus the hospitality from the other is necessary for the establishment of interiority and subjectivity (pp.138-140). Second, Levinasian understanding of

⁹⁵ Levinas does not refute or reject the production of knowledge. Rather he considers the exercise of power through knowledge as an inevitable feature of work of the dwelling subject. He also considers it as an object of enjoyment (Kang, 2005, p.143).

life as 'Being as love of life' is taken positively because the corporeal being can welcome the other in concrete manners from his experience of enjoyment and dwelling and goods that he makes, which he can offer for the other: 'Thanks to his joy in living and his creation of a home, the human being is able to give and to receive the other into his space' (Bergo, 2011).

In spite of the positivity, however, Levinas does not find the ground of ethics from the separated I. This is because ethics comes about from the appearance of the other, who comes to pass the interiority. How does the other come? How can the coming to pass of the other be described? How can the face-to-face as the non-agential moment be described? These questions can be answered on the basis of understanding of Levinas's distinction between phenomenon and expression. Phenomenon refers to the truth of the other being who is disclosed by work of the separated I, but it is not that of being itself, while expression refers to the mode of encounter with the other who is a being, and presents herself in the immediate moment:

Being, the thing in itself is not, with the respect to the phenomenon, the hidden. ... The truth of disclosure is at most the truth of the phenomenon hidden under the appearances; the truth of the thing in itself is not disclosed. The thing in itself expresses itself. Expression manifests the presence of being, but not by simply drawing aside the veil of the phenomenon. It is of itself presence of a face and hence appeal and teaching, *entry into relation* with me-the ethical relation. (Levinas, 2007, p. 181, emphasis original)

The I separated from the other, rearing in its interiority, is bound up with its phenomenality because all his work, that is the mode of existence of the separated I, manifests him in the absence of his being. Work does not express me but signals and symbolises me; in doing so it reveals me only

in concealing me. 'To be expressed by one's life, by one's works, is precisely to decline expression' (p.176),⁹⁶ and

The *who* involved in activity is not *expressed* in the activity ... is simply signified in it by a sign in a system of signs, that is, as being who is manifested precisely as absent from his manifestation: a manifestation in the absence of being – a phenomenon. (p.178)

The separated I living out of his works is surrounded by phenomena. This is the I who experiences things that are manifested by my agential movement and who is manifested by his works, all that is the production of the separated I; who meets himself as a phenomenon: 'The phenomenon is the being that appears but absents itself from its apparition, corresponds exactly to the meaning of the phenomenon.' Bound up with its phenomenality, it is not accidental but necessary for the separated I to forget transcendence (p.181). Trapped in the system of signs, the significance of all that is already said, infinity, a Desire beyond phenomenality, is attenuated then lost without breaking until the moment of 'expression' of being, viz. the face-to-face, comes to pass.

Hence 'the other's face is not an object. It is pure expression; expression affects me before I can begin to reflect on it' (Bergo, 2011). Unlike phenomenon, expression comes to pass but leaves a trace in me, viz. affection. Expression as what comes to pass is an immediacy but it is a lived immediacy in that the corporeally separated I encounters the face of the other. The moment that the other expresses herself is always prior to my reflection upon it. It is the non-agential moment prior to my agential comprehension of it; it is a pre-cognitive moment.⁹⁷ The other in this sense is exteriority that breaks interiority with its incommensurability (alterity), and reveals the insufficiency (phenomenality) of the interiority (Levinas, 2007, p. 179). As Levinas puts it:

⁹⁶ But at the same time 'the signs constitute and protect my privacy' (Levinas, 2007, p.176).

⁹⁷ Levinas often uses the term proximity to describe this moment: 'The proximity of the Other, the proximity of the neighbor, is in being an ineluctable moment of the revelation of an absolute presence ... which expresses itself' (Levinas, 2007, 79).

By virtue of this relationship ... man does not permit himself to be deceived by his glorious triumph as a living being, and unlike the animal can know the difference between being and phenomenon, can recognize his phenomenality, the penury of his plenitude, a penury inconvertible to needs which, being beyond plenitude and void, cannot be gratified. (pp.179-80)

But at the same time as the fundamental critique of interiority, the face, coming to pass as expression (giving her being, not a phenomenon) in the immediate moment, is always vulnerable to be forgotten or to be absorbed into my power of comprehension. Levinas calls the vulnerability and forgettability nudity and defencelessness. In its defenceless nudity the face commands and summons, saying 'Do not kill me', an ethical vocation affecting me before my recognition; 'a passive resistance to the desire that is my freedom' (Bergo, 2011). Ethics as my response to the approach of the other, that is otherwise than or prior to my agential movement, is to 'welcome her expression' (Levinas, 2007, p.50). To welcome her expression is to hear her 'destitution which cries out for justice' and 'is not to represent an image to oneself, but is to posit oneself as responsible' for her, who is 'thus the stranger, the widow, and the orphan' (p.215), who dominate me with the ethical exigency (p.207) since they are deficient in something essential for their existence: home, spouse and parents (Bergo, 2011). With the ethical exigency, the other commands and summons me. Hence the other comes not from outside of me but from 'above' me, so that the relation with the other is not equal or correlative, but is essentially 'asymmetrical' (Levinas, 2007, p.216).⁹⁸

The ethical exigency arising out of invocation of the face of the other, which sets the relation with her to be essentially asymmetrical, 'engenders me as responsibility; as responsible I am brought to my final reality'. Having set the separated I as responsibility, Levinas discloses how to respond to the other not in the mode of agential moment but at the very moment of the ethical relation. It is to

⁹⁸ As a description of my response, Levinas said that one cannot welcome the other with empty hands; rather one gives the bread to the other out of his mouth; a bread that is essential for his life. To take the essential need of the other as the first priority before me indicates the ethical relation is essentially asymmetrical.

attend to the presence of the other; it is to be oneself not in its phenomenality; to express oneself. 'Being attentive signifies a surplus of consciousness' by the call of the other and it is 'to recognize the mastery of the other, to receive his command, ... to receive from him the command to command' (p.179). To attend at the very moment of encounter with the other is to speak; to enter dialogue that is the straightforwardness of the face-to-face. Out of its phenomenality and out of mirror play, the I enters into the presence of the other in responsibility so that it takes its centre outside of its being but in the other:

This is not a play of mirror but my responsibility, that is, an existence already obligated. It places the center of gravitation of a being outside of that being. The surpassing of phenomenal or inward existence does not consist in receiving the recognition of the Other, but in offering him one's being. To be in oneself is to express oneself, that is, already to serve the Other. The ground of expression is goodness. (p. 183)

Responsibility indicates 'a soul capable of containing more than it can draw from itself' (p.180). The command that the I receives from the other and the affection that the other leaves upon me is the very production of *the first teaching*. The term teaching designates the calling from the height, from the face of the other, not from my exploration or self-constructive knowing. It is not like the Socratic maieutics that prevails in education. Thus 'the first teaching teaches this very height, tantamount to its exteriority, the ethical'. In doing so, it becomes critique that calls the naïveté of the direct impulse, the naïveté of the being exercising itself as a force on the move into question from the height; from the vulnerable face that makes the I feel ashamed of its naïve use of power. But this does not mean that the other is another force that violates me (p.171); rather

His alterity is manifested in a mastery that does not conquer, but teaches. Teaching is not a species of a genus called domination, a hegemony at work within a totality, but is the presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of totality. (p.171)

The first teaching is not a scandal to reason. In the ontological sense of both Heidegger and Bhaskar, reason is constituted within its horizon or by the disposition and arrangement of an agent into the existing society. In this sense, reason is what is already in and familiar to me and on which I act. But the alterity of the other producing the first teaching should not be considered as a scandal to reason because there resides rational character of ethical relation. To see alterity of the other as scandal is to presuppose 'the tranquil identity of the same' as being freed from all participation and being independent of everything. But the other in ethical relation puts the freedom and 'the brutal spontaneity of one's immanent destiny' into question, so that the other 'put[s] an end to violence and contingency, and in this sense also, funds Reason'; the first teaching becomes the condition for all teaching. Different from Socratic maieutics, teaching as the idea of infinity in me is 'a content overflowing the container [that] breaks with the prejudice of maieutics without breaking with rationalism'. It establishes rationality to be ethical (pp.202-204). In this sense, to be 'being', not a phenomenon, is to learn from the teaching; or in other words, to learn is the very mode of to be 'being'. That being, who is exposed to the other, is capable of 'incessant reception of teaching', hence 'of incessant overflowing of self' (p.204). The teaching therefore is the very ground of genuine sense of transformation beyond oneself and despite oneself.⁹⁹

That being in incessant learning is ethical subjectivity. At this juncture, Levinas explores the nature of the will of the I. The will is essentially the 'for itself'; it is a desire for itself. All characteristics of the egoism, like spontaneity, freedom and agential movement, are essentially related with the will. How then can the will break out of the 'for itself'? How can the will be integrated into responsibility? It is by patience through suffering. When the for itself as the essential nature of the will undergoes suffering it experiences the ultimate passivity where the will cannot work. Pain is the consciousness of the suffering. To be conscious of suffering means, despite the ultimate passivity, to be master of the object (suffering) in consciousness. In other words, '[i]n

⁹⁹ This is an important point for meeting Bhaskar. As will be argued later, Levinas's ethical rationality can be consistent with Bhaskar's ethical realism in so far as it is integrated with the very ground of explanatory critique from which Bhaskar argues for ethical realism.

suffering the free being ceases to be free, but, while non-free, is yet free'. And to have the consciousness of pain means that it has undergone a certain time of suffering; the duration is patience. Thus, 'this ultimate passivity which nonetheless desperately turns into action and into hope, is patience – the passivity of undergoing, and yet mastery itself' (p. 238). It is often said that death is the end of the will, but it is not the supreme ordeal of the will; that is suffering, because hatred is the case mainly when it desires not simply death of the other but the inflicting of death in suffering on the other. However, with the Desire for the other in responsibility, 'violence remain[s] endurable in patience. It is produced only in a world where I can die *as a result of someone* and *for someone*.' Such patience seems absurd, but it is possibly so only on the ground of ethical signification. Here the meaning of death, that is my death, is emptied, since the gravity of my centre is displaced outside of myself 'to will as Desire and Goodness limited by nothing'; hence it is the break through the crust of my egoism (p.239, emphasis original). 'In this extreme consciousness, where the will reaches mastery in a new sense, where the death no longer touches it, ... The egoism of the will stands on the verge of an existence that no longer accents itself' (p239); it turns to ethical subjectivity.

5. Ethical Subjectivity in Duration: the other-in-the-same

In his book *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas discloses ethical subjectivity by stressing the distance and absolute separatedness between the I and the other. He designates the moment of encounter between two as the face-to-face moment, which is the moment of infinity that comes to pass, arousing responsibility in the I for the other, which is called ethics. In spite of the repetition of the face-to-face encounter in everyday life, it might be reasonable to suspect that ethics is contingent and dependent on the response of the I. In his second mature book, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (Levinas, 1991), Levinas provides a new concept, 'the Other-in-the-same', to capture 'the extraordinary everydayness of ... responsibility' (p.147), which indicates responsibility's enduring. By unpacking the concept he shows the way in which responsibility endures through the birth of ethical subjectivity, which might grow with ethical rationality, and how ... 'responsibility and transcendence enter into the continuum of time and being ... and how ... an investiture of this intensity passes into reason' (Bergo, 2011). He begins the book with the meaning of transcendence:

If transcendence has meaning, it can only signify the fact that the *event of being*, the *esse*, the *essence*, passes over to what is other than being ... [it] is passing over to being's *other*, otherwise than being. Not *to be otherwise*, but *otherwise than being*. And not to not-be. (Levinas, 1991, p.3, emphasis original)

By this meaning of transcendence Levinas continues to undermine Heidegger, particularly by tackling the concept of being. It is because being is in war, like totality, that being needs to pass over to being's other or beyond being.¹⁰⁰ Levinas discloses the nature of being through etymological analysis of being; the meaning of being is rooted in essence, which in turn designates the *esse* as meaning 'the process or event of being'.¹⁰¹ And '*Esse is interesse*' and essence is interested. Thus

¹⁰⁰ 'Beyond' seems an appropriate term to denote the difference made by transcendence (Levinas, 1991, p.3).

¹⁰¹ See, note 1 in Levinas, 1991, p.187.

‘being’ understood from its ‘essence’ is being-interested that is bound up in its interest; furthermore, being is understood as a verbal form (a verb that vibrates from and for its essence). Positively it confirms the *conatus* of being¹⁰² but negatively its dramatic form is egoism, whose deeds are at war against all others who are also defined as being-interested. Interested in itself, being remains in its presence; characteristic to its way of life is re-presentation out of its memory and history, including that of the other; being as present is without fissures or surprises (pp.4-5).¹⁰³

Otherwise than being denotes beyond being, whose gravitation of the centre is displaced to outside of it, in the sense not of contingency but of duration. Here the new concept of the Other-in-the-same is introduced to designate the duration of responsibility. ‘It does not abrogate the *de facto* approach’ of the other person but, as the event increases to repeat in everyday life, ‘the question of immanence arises in regard to responsibility’s enduring out of the expansion of ethical events. The affection from the other left upon me as trace also repeats and expands so that ‘the status of a memory of sensuous events’ is framed as ‘sensibility as intrinsically meaningful, intrinsically beyond-itself’. Sensibility and affectivity are now conceived as the very foundation on which the ethical subjectivity is built and resides. The new concept of ethical subjectivity, that is, the-other-in-the-same, is described as an affective-sensible embodiment, who endures responsibility (Bergo, 2011).¹⁰⁴ Thus the Levinasian ethical subject is a sensible subject who subjects himself to the other. ‘[T]he form that this subjection assumes is that of sensibility or sentience. Sensibility is what Levinas calls “the way” of my subjection’. By subjection to the other, ethics is lived in the sensibility which, in doing so, is exposed to the other, taking a call from the other upon ‘me’ so that ego turns to ‘me’, which is *subject* for Levinas, aroused in response to the other’s call (Critchley et al., 2002, pp.21-22):

¹⁰² From a critical realist position Collier (1994) defines the *conatus* as the real (the intrinsic tendencies) of human being.

¹⁰³ As will be seen, ‘otherwise than being’, as contra to being, would be seen as ‘the overflowing of sense by nonsense, the bottomless passivity or subversion of essence’ (Levinas, 1991, p.164).

¹⁰⁴ By defining ethical subject as embodied being who is capable of hunger and enjoyment so that he can know what it means to give bread out of its mouth for the other. It is ‘the world’s shortest refutation of Heidegger’ that, Levinas claims, ‘*Dasein* is never hungry’ (Critchley et al., 2002, p.21).

Levinas phenomenologically reduces the abstract ego to me, to myself as the one who undergoes the demand or call of the other. As Levinas puts it, ... ('Subjectivity is not the Ego, but me'). That is, my first word is not Descartes's 'ego cogito' ('I am, I think'), it is rather 'me voici!' ('here I am!' or 'see me here'), the word with which the prophet testifies to the presence of God. For Levinas, the subject arises in the response to the other's call. (Critchley et al., 2002, p.22)

But to respond as a sensibility again indicates vulnerability or passivity, because enduring responsibility takes place 'on the surface of the skin, at the edge of the nerves' (Levinas, 1991, p. 15). The sensibility on the skin is termed proximity by Levinas,¹⁰⁵ that is, a proximity to the other, not standing equally together with the other but substituting oneself for the other; substitution is the basis of the relation of proximity, and is 'the centrepiece' of the book (Critchley et al., 2002, p.22).

Having said that the subject of sensibility is formed from the memory of affective-sensuous events, this memory cannot be regarded as like the memory that is a work of the I who does so in the form of representation. The appropriate term for this memory is, rather, the immemorial. Memory in the sense of the agential movement is representation of what is already 'said'. But the affective signification aroused by the coming to pass of the other is left as trace upon me *before* my memory or recognition; it is beyond the said. That affective-sensuous trace Levinas calls the immemorial.

The immemorial is not an effect of a weakness of memory, an incapacity to across large intervals of time, to resuscitate pasts too deep. It is the impossibility of the dispersion of time to assemble itself in the present, the insurmountable diachrony of time, a beyond of the said. It is diachrony that determines the immemorial. (Levinas, 1991, p.38)

¹⁰⁵ The relation in proximity is also characterised with non-intentionality or non-teleology; it is disparate to being's interestedness in itself (Levinas, 1991, p.90).

The immemorial however occurs in consciousness. Levinas calls this state anarchic. He describes it as a passion or source that occurs in consciousness but always slips away from the very play of consciousness; that is, re-presentation of an object, a form of domination of the interiority. He asks:

How in consciousness can there be an undergoing or passion whose active source does not, in any way, occur in consciousness? This exteriority has to be emphasized. It is not objective or spatial, recuperable in immanence and thus falling under the orders of –and in the order of – consciousness; it is obsessional, non-thematizable and, in the sense we have ... defied, anarchic. (p.102)

The infinitely exterior becomes an 'inward' voice (p.147), an anarchically resonant voice calling me to respond. Levinas distinguishes between the I and the me: the I is the mastery subject of consciousness while the me takes its form in ethical situation. It is the me who is called by the other; the one, saying 'me voice!'; it is the ethical subjectivity born out of the anarchy.¹⁰⁶ The me is 'the ontological and metalogical structure of the anarchy' (p.102) because it is born in anarchy:

The subject is born in the beginninglessness of an anarchy and in the endlessness of obligation, gloriously augmenting as though infinity came to pass in it. In the absolute assignation of the subject the Infinity is enigmatically heard: before and beyond. The extent and accent of the voice in which the Infinite is thus heard will have to be made clear. (Levinas, 1991, p.140)

So far all description of sensibility, proximity, the immemorial, anarchy and the anarchical birth of ethical subjectivity has been given as an explanation of the duration of responsibility;

¹⁰⁶ Undergoing affection, consciousness finds itself in a state of being against the will for itself; against its very nature. Thus to be an ethical subjectivity is already to be persecuted. As Levinas says, 'In these traits, we recognize a persecution; being called into a question prior to questioning ... It is as though persecution by another were at the bottom of solidarity with another (Levinas, 1991, p.102). His description of persecution reminds patience that he described in *Totality in Infinity* as an essential feature of ethical subjectivity.

explaining it as more than an event but *being otherwise*; a duration.¹⁰⁷ It is an answer to how infinity can reside within the finite without losing its significance; answering to how the infinitely exterior becomes an inward voice. With the notion of duration we may assume a structural form of ethics, called here ethical structure. It consists of the separation, the emergence of the same, the coming of the other at the non-agential moment, the rise of responsibility and the mysterious residue of responsibility in the same (duration). But it is not the end of Levinas's ethics. There are two further constitutive parts to be included in the ethical structure: the movement of the same to the other, and the third party.¹⁰⁸

The anarchical inward voice has to be lived out through the ethical subjectivity. The term duration is designated to imply not only the residue of the other-in-the-same but also the movement of the same to the other in its responsibility. Here Levinas uses the terms 'the saying and the said' in order to describe the subject's living out of the inward voice: the-same-for-the-other. As a simple explanation, the said can be the content of my words, identifiable with certain meaning or objects, which have already undergone the sign systems I have used. The said is 'for the service of life as like an exchange of information through a linguistic system'; in this comprehension and representation of information are presupposed. Thus information, comprehension, representation and even the linguistic system itself are already the said. They are thematised, thematisable within the operation of the agential comprehension. But the saying is witness of the anarchical inward voice; 'the saying is a non thematizable ethical residue of language that escapes comprehension, [but] interrupts' the agential movement. It is 'the very enactment of the movement from the same to the other' (Critchley et al., 2002, p.18). As the witness of the ethical voice resonating anarchically in me, the saying as for the same is to give oneself as signification to the other and for the other.

The saying is to approach to the other as 'communication which is not reducible to the phenomenon of truth' because the saying is to express and expose itself, not a phenomenon, to the

¹⁰⁷ This concept of duration is particular to Levinas's concept of time.

¹⁰⁸ This structure form is heuristic and analytical for the explanatory purpose for ethics.

other. By exposing, the one undertakes for the other 'the risky uncovering of oneself, in sincerity, the breaking up of inwardness and the abandon of all shelter, exposure to traumas, vulnerability'. The saying as the approach to the other expresses itself out of its home; being expelled, no longer dwelling; exposing itself to outrage, to insults and wounding. The subject of the saying is not in itself but is being turned to another, being turned inside out, not giving signs but becoming signs. The subject in the saying is open to separating itself from its own inwardness, making him disinterestedness, torn up from itself, the 'one-penetrated-by-the-other'. Thus the saying is the most passive passivity, obedience, the sense of patience and pain, suffering without reason.¹⁰⁹ It is folly and it is obsessional. But without this folly it would not be possible to go beyond essence (Levinas, 1991, pp.48-50). And in spite of all that suffering, the subject of the saying is the way that the infinity passes the finite and as the subject bears witness to the infinity, so that the infinity has glory only through the subject (pp. 147-148).

Ethics in the sense of the saying is the movement of the same to the other and for the other. At first it is in the form of a direct saying to the other as an exposure, as giving oneself as signification; it is the first teaching lived out by the same in proximity. But as time goes on, the repeated significance should be integrated in the constitution of life beyond proximity relation. The same at this juncture is not identified as being at war as marked in *Totality and Infinity*; war can be rationally mitigated on the ground of the ethical signification. A Text can be written on this ground, and be unsaid under the light of the first teaching. The sensuous vulnerable and broken subject can be an author of such text. The possibility of ethical sensation is therefore always presupposed in the following agential constitution of life, rationality and tradition. So Levinas speaks of 'pre-natural signification' in the midst of the unavoidable return of the intentional consciousness in making those constitutions (Bergo, 2011).

¹⁰⁹ Levinas calls the subject of the saying 'ipseity', by which he denotes 'the most concrete and particular core of the subject' (Bergo, 2011): 'The [I]ipseity has become at odds with itself with its return to itself. The self-accusation of remorse gnaws away at the closed and firm core of consciousness, opening it, fissioning it' (Levinas, 1991, p.125).

In renouncing [Husserl's] intentionality as a guiding thread toward the eidos [formal structure] of the psyche ... our analysis will follow sensibility in its prenatal signification to the maternal, where, in proximity [to what is not itself], signification signifies [as sincerity] before it gets bent into *perseverance in being* in the midst of a Nature. (Bergo, 2011, opt. Levinas, 1991, p. 68)

Here a crucial question is raised: 'how is the saying to be said?', 'how is the ethical saying to be conceptualized – and necessarily betrayed – within the ontological said?' (Critchley et al., 2002, p.18). 'How do responsibility and transcendence enter into the continuum of time and Being?' (Bergo, 2011). The question is crucial because of the problem of inevitable thematisation of the saying in the course of life constitution. As seen in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas's ethical project was about overcoming or abandonment of ontology in the presence of ethical exigency and primacy, but in his second major book, he admits the unavoidability of the said that is alone the birth place of ontology, stating that, 'contesting the abdication of the saying ... everywhere occurs in this said' (Levinas, 1991, p.44). Thus one might worry about the total abdication of the saying in the course of life constitution, while facing the unavoidability of the saying to be the said as our life is not always in proximity. Can the saying be the said? Even if so, there must be a certain degree of betrayal. Little-by-little, Levinas becomes sensitive to this problem. The answer he explores is what we term ethical rationality.

Here is the return of the intentional consciousness as the place of the ethical rationality. It would be called ethically assigned intentional consciousness. The term 'illeity' is most important here to address the very core of the ethical subjectivity, whose consciousness is the case only of ethically assigned consciousness. Illeity is 'the coming of the order to which I am subjected before hearing it, or which I hear in my own saying ... the pure trace of a "wandering cause", inscribed in me ... the anarchism of inspiration or of prophecy' (p.150). It indicates something the infinity left on the cognition which is 'quite different from being and knowing' (p.162) but by which reason is

assigned with responsibility in its conscious life. Inscribed in consciousness illeity can be regarded as the core and the ground on which ethical rationality is constructed. Indifferent to the dimension of illeity, Bhaskar's ethical realism is based on the premises of the fact-to-value formula, which claims that value can be drawn from fact through explanatory critique. However, Elder-vass questions Bhaskar's ethical naturalism for its unacknowledged *a priori* value; a value, he argues, that is always presupposed implicitly, explicitly or unbeknownst to oneself, when one derives a value from a fact through explanatory critique. He argues that explanatory critique can have its validity 'on premises that there are already values and thus they do not derive values from facts'; rather it is likely value from value (Elder-vass, 2010, p.37). Elder-vass's argument does not invalidate explanatory critique. Rather it unveils the fact that there is something in the deepest part of consciousness which grounds and pulses any sort of judgement to ethical. Illeity might be that something inscribed and resonant in consciousness on which ethical rationality is constructed so that one can live out the first teaching not only in personal relation (in proximity) but also in a wider social life. If illeity is something inscribed in the innermost part of mind, like the psyche, equally true is that it is inscribed so through the very skin of human sensibility! As sensuous we are such that all we can be is ethical, and would have ethical rationality each from its own ethical ground. Thus ethics is plural as face is plural, and is communicable between people and in society.¹¹⁰ This leads to the last point of the ethical structure: third party.

With the entry of the third party and the consequent emergence of exigency for justice, Levinas becomes more sensitive to the role of consciousness. The third party is the one who is concerned about me, treating me as an other for him alongside of the other I face. He is alone ethical subject, and treats me as someone to be concerned about, someone to answer for out of his ethical obligation. Now the scope of ethics extends from interpersonal relation to a wider social relation in that one finds 'the problems of co-presence (pluralism) and synchronization, of distributive justice'. An order is required among responsibilities in order to prevent waste of

¹¹⁰ In spite of the pluralism of ethics, Levinas insists upon the point that singularity is the very locus of ethics.

someone's ethical commitment or any violation upon those in service for the other. It requires 'reckonings, rationality, systematization', which in turn require the bringing forth of a sort of rationality of which place is consciousness. Furthermore, exigency of justice calls impersonal agency like the State to respond to the problem, particularly in the structural level of social relation. All these require ethical rationality working as a principle; or, in Levinas's term, philosophy as the wisdom of love:

A problem is posited by proximity itself, which, as the immediate itself, is without problems. The extraordinary commitment of the other to the third party calls for control, a search for justice, society and the State, comparison and possession, thought and science, commerce and philosophy, and outside of anarchy, the search for a principle. Philosophy is this measure brought to the infinity of the being-for-the-other of proximity, and is like the wisdom of love. (Levinas, 1991, p.161)

As a final point however, grounded on illeity and constructed in the form of the said, ethical rationality needs to be exposed again for attenuation of reification of the said and for the possible transformation of the said if necessary. The kind of exposure in this case is not like the exposure of oneself to the other. The exposure of ethical rationality is called 'reduction'. Levinas claims that the second exposure is possible because behind all the said 'there is ... already heard the resonance of other significances forgotten in ontology, which now solicit our inquiry' (p.38). The way of the inquiry is reduction, which is going back to the very first ethical significance from what thematised or what regarded as essence (p.44). In other words, reduction is the way in which the said can be unsaid. So, all text, including the religious, needs to be unsaid under the light of the very first teaching, the very first ethical signification, the first revelation, which may be resonant somehow in the text. So the reduction is a deconstructive and hermeneutical participation in the text in search of the first signification (Bergo, 2011). Ethics in this sense is 'the persistent deconstruction of the limits

of ontology and its claims to conceptual mastery, while recognizing the unavoidability of the said' (Critchley et al., 2002, p.18).

We have seen the whole feature of the ethical structure of responsibility: constituents of the structure are the separation, the coming of the other at the non-agential moment, the rise of responsibility, the mysterious residue of responsibility in the same (duration), the movement of the same to the other (the saying and the said), ethical rationality, the entry of third party, and reduction. From this ethical structure, we can now speak of the other in two senses: the other-in-me (the anarchic voice in me) and the other everywhere and everyday around me as 'face' who comes to pass; the former from immemorial past and the latter as the other in the very non-agential moment of presence. Ethical subjectivity as a person stands always in between those others; born from the non-agential moment, growing up with the resonant inner voice, facing the face every day, developing ethical rationality in a wider social life then seeking back its original meaning of life.

6. Otherness and Ontology – Filling of the lacuna

Starting from the initial questions of the non-agential moment and otherness of the other, which were raised by the reading of Bhaskarian ontology in the previous chapters, this chapter has attempted to present Levinas's philosophy as providing an answer to them. In this final section, we present a critical dialogue between the two philosophies in terms of their compatibility and difference, then identify a point of integration between them.

Putting both Levinasian otherness in a dialogue with Bhaskarian ontology, we will start by pointing out the compatibility between them. First, the Levinasian account can be understood in terms of the Bhaskarian holy trinity of critical realism. We have seen that both accounts show the

same initial concern: the independence of exteriority.¹¹¹ Against the epistemic fallacy generated from empirical realism, Bhaskar argues for the independence of reality from our knowledge of it: reality exists out there independently, and is not reducible to, or exhausted by, our knowledge of it. The independence of reality is designated in terms of the intransitive dimension of knowledge. Levinas too is concerned first of all with the problem of reduction of exteriority (the other) in the comprehension. The independence of exteriority is exemplified by Infinity, alterity and the face. From their statements that exteriority exists out there and it is not reducible to comprehension, we can say that both share a kind of ontological realist account of exteriority. Moreover, both account exteriority as what cannot be fully grasped in our understanding, although for different reasons. For Bhaskar it is because of the limited access to the real due to its non-transparency, while for Levinas it is because of the ambivalence of infinity that always moves away from thematisation then reappears as a question mark (Levinas, 1991, p.161).¹¹² This non-transparency and ambivalence produce limited hence contingent and sometimes competing accounts of the exteriority. So we can say that epistemic relativism is at work in both accounts. Furthermore, the contingent or competing knowledge of exteriority can be judged as much as possible under the light of the exteriority itself. For Levinas it is called reduction, which seems compatible with Bhaskar's judgemental rationality. What this indicates is the possibility of integration between two accounts in terms of the holy trinity of critical realism.

The second compatible point between them can be found in their structural understanding of ethical rationality.¹¹³ Ethics is neither a moral idea, nor legislation, for either of them. Rather ethics in both accounts has its rationality, which has been constructed through the life course of the

¹¹¹ Here the term exteriority is used inclusively of Bhaskar's 'reality' that exists out there independently.

¹¹² The reader may remember that infinity or the face of the other is described as the immemorial, but as an anarchic voice in consciousness.

¹¹³ Again, the term ethical rationality is used here to include Bhaskar's dialectical rationality as long as they are concerned with ethics. Later, however, when their difference becomes an issue, the two terms will be used separately.

agent's multi-level relation in which diverse social structures and levels are reflected.¹¹⁴ Ethical rationality is understood in terms of processuality; it is not static but is in continual dialectical construction. At the outset of the process, the structural understanding of ethical rationality in both accounts recognises the importance of the (concrete) singularity of the agency as the starting site of the ethics, considering ethics as dependent upon him. Once ethical rationality is set on the ground of the singularity,¹¹⁵ the ethical agent will seek and conduct absenting absence in its multi-level relation. In doing so, his ethical rationality will take the course of development as described in *Dialectics*: developing as process-in-product and product-in-process (Hartwig, 2007, p.9).¹¹⁶ This indicates the possibility of integration of Levinasian ethical rationality with Bhaskarian dialectical rationality.¹¹⁷

In spite of the possibility of integration between Levinasian otherness and Bhaskarian otology within the parameter of critical realism, however, there seems to be a radical (or ultimate) difference between them which generates some other significant differences, including the difference in stance between agential centredness and the non-agential moment. The radical difference is related to the understating of the initial setting of the agent on the ethical ground. What makes a singular person to be set on the ethical ground? For Bhaskar it is alethia, while for Levinas it is otherness of the other. In a simpler definition we can say that alethia is 'implicit' in all beings, guiding and setting beings on tendential directionality with axiological necessities that generate transformative negation (absenting absence) toward universal emancipation. Thus it is alethia that sets an agent to be ethical and to pursue the ethical dimension in life, since it is implicit

¹¹⁴ The multi-level relation of the human agent can be seen in the four-planar social relation of the human agent in Bhaskar's account. In the case of Levinas, it is seen in his consideration of the role of third party, including the State, for ethical life in the society in which the ethical subject is actively involved.

¹¹⁵ The account of the initial setting of the agent on the ethical ground is the point of greatest divergence between Bhaskar and Levinas. This point will be dealt with later, but for the time being what is concerned is the process after the initial setting.

¹¹⁶ Bhaskar conceives absence with a product/process bipolarity, which is retained in all stages of the dialectical movement (his MELD), issuing different types of association between the two poles at each stage: '(1) *product* (simple absence) [at 1M]; (2) *process* (simple absenting) [at 2E]; (3) *process-in-product* [at 3L]; and (4) *product-in-process* [at 4D]' (Hartwig, 2007, p.9). Absenting absence in each stage will render the ethical rationality to be developed in the same pattern of dialectical construction.

¹¹⁷ It seems to be possible only, as will be argued later, if the contrasting accounts of the initial setting of ethics are resolved.

in the agent with the tendential directionality toward emancipation (pp.26-29). In the actual course of life, it starts from the existential context of the agent where his first choice is to absent absence, let us say hunger, in order for freedom from hunger. Based on this existential experience of freedom, the agent can now develop the sense of freedom for the other (solidarity) through perspectival switch.¹¹⁸ Here we can see the dialectical logic of ethical rationality from freedom to solidarity; the latter would be the proper case of ethics while the former is focused on freedom. Thus it takes an extensional structure from the desire for my freedom to the desire for the other's freedom; the latter is entrained by the former. Therefore by putting together the idea of alethia with the dialectical logic, it can be said that the human agent is implicitly ethical from eternity, so that it is somehow guided by the alethia in its actual course of life to pursue freedom for oneself and gradually for the other.

However, in the previous chapter, this account was challenged through the reconsideration of Bhaskar's pivotal concept, absence. There it was argued that if we specify absencing absence (hunger for example) in two cases – absencing my hunger and absencing the other's hunger – then it must be that the first case is natural and necessary to the I while the second case cannot be natural to the I unless the first case is satisfied. This is particularly so if both the I and the other are in a situation of desperate hunger. Thus to take the second case instead of the first from the outset is not natural to or necessitated from the I because the first case is not satisfied;¹¹⁹ to give the bread out of my mouth to the other despite my hunger is not natural, but ethical, and it is not the work of freedom; it is ethical in the face of the other. According to Levinas, ethics is not generated from freedom; rather freedom makes ethics an option or opinion. Moreover freedom entails a greater likelihood of the exercise of power in the form of possession and mastery (that is interested in its own conatus alive) than does ethics. One may use his freedom for the other but it is not natural or

¹¹⁸ Perspectival switch is a special quality and ability affirmed from the constellational unity. See section 2.2. of Chapter 2.

¹¹⁹ This argument would be supported by Bhaskar's logic of dialectical rationality, which stresses the existential experience of my freedom as the starting point.

necessary. It is only agential choice through perspectival switch. Therefore, for Bhaskar the human agent is still the possible site of ethics but ethics does *not necessarily or naturally* come out from the agent alone, even if he has the ability of perspectival switch. Even the perspectival switch itself is the very agential rational grasp of the other, grasping the other only according to my understanding of the situation of the other while ignoring or indifferent to the otherness of the other.

For Levinas, absencing hunger of the other is ethical and is only possible because the face of the other commands me. It is not a rational understanding, but is pre-cognitive affection upon me. The initial setting of the I on the ethical ground is not the work of the agential movement or choice; rather it is by calling of the other, by being exposed to the other. Thus it is not the agential moment but the non-agential moment. Even the implicit alethia, if there is such a thing, in me cannot replace the significance that the other brings to me. It is not a kind of Platonic reminiscence of what is already in me. It is not drawing out from inside, but is rather sensuous affection on me from exteriority, viz. the other whose invocation puts my freedom into question. Therefore ethics is a breach of freedom. By being commanded my will for myself is persecuted. I become a hostage for the other. Therefore, the relationship with the other in ethics is asymmetrical.

This all signifies one more crucial difference between Bhaskar's ethics and Levinas's ethics in regard to the logic of ethical rationality. As seen above, in Bhaskar's case, ethics is extended from my freedom to universal freedom through transformative negation and perspectival switch. So we can see the movement from being to becoming. However, in Levinas, ethics is only signified by the coming of the other to the I; then all ethical changes including transformative negations (becoming) take place. Furthermore, in serving for the other, according to Levinas, there is inevitable suffering upon the ethical subject. It is very much characteristic to ethics because ethics is giving oneself for the other in spite of one's freedom, will and desires; absencing hunger of the other in spite of my starvation. This dimension of suffering, or in Levinas's term, substitution, is almost indifferent to Bhaskar's ethics. While for Levinas ethics is traumatic, for Bhaskar ethics is described almost with

freedom. In the dialectical rationality or logic, the dimension of suffering seems hard, or even logically impossible, to place. The table below sets out the differences between the two accounts.

Table 3.1. A comparison between Bhaskarian ontology and Levinasian otherness

Transcendental Realism	Critical Naturalism	Dialectics	Otherness
(1) 'Implicit' as the primary mode of being (2) Tendencies as 'properties' of being (3) Processual structure from 'being to becoming': a process of realisation (4) Dependence of the realisation-process on 'circumstances'	(1) Reasons (tendencies) as primarily being 'implicit' (2) Reasons as 'properties' of a person (3) Realisation of a persons' reasons through actions or internal conversations (4) Circumstances of a person as enablements or constraints to the realisation	(1) Alethia as primarily 'implicit' in all beings (2) 1M non-identity and 3L totality as 'properties' of being (3) 'Being to becoming' through exercise of real negation at 2E and 4D (4) Constellational relations (including perspectival switch) with circumstances	(1) The other as 'exteriority' (2) No-one is property of anyone (3) Ethical processual structure 'coming to Being then Becoming (otherwise)' (4) Ethical relation as asymmetrical

Therefore, it can be said that Bhaskarian ontology and Levinasian otherness have points both of compatibility and of radical divergence. In this regard the chapter provides, in addition to the compatible points, a point of integration between the two accounts in terms of ethical subjectivity, which may fill the lacuna in Bhaskarian ontology while putting Levinasian otherness on a critical realist ground. The ethical subjectivity is an openness prior to openness; 'Before it is a devotion to Being, it is a subjection to the Good' (Levinas, 1991, p.xxi). The first openness is the subjection (exposedness) to the other, which is followed by the second openness that is devotion to Being, which is agential involvement of Dasein. The second openness *presupposes* ethics, the first teaching from the other, though it is also true that the first teaching may have become a meaningful pulse of the ethically assigned intentional consciousness of the subject:

Here I exist as the author of what was put to me despite myself and unbeknownst to myself. ... The force of God, the proximity of infinity, has all its inscription in my own voice. ... It is even always dissimulated in the movement by which the saying itself converts into, is fixed in a said. All saying, which says Being, dissimulates this Beyond. It is only aimed at – or, more exactly, addressed – retrospectively or reductively by a critical back from the already-said. (pp.xxxiv-xxxv)

The double openness provides a point of comparison between Bhaskarian ethical agent and Levinasian ethical subjectivity. In both cases openness seems to be that which makes human being such. Bhaskarian agent is explained with only one kind of openness: dialectical openness, which is natural. Bhaskar defines the human agent as an open totality on the ground of human being's dialectical nature, of which a short definition could be *process-in-product* and *product-in-process*. So it is the dialectical nature that makes possible the dialectical openness in that ethics, understood as a characteristic agential movement, is incorporated through transformative negation. However, Levinasian subjectivity consists of two kinds of openness: *a priori* openness to the other (ethical), that sustains and pulses the following dialectical openness to be a special case (ethical). As we have seen, the first and prior openness indicates the exposure to the other, while the second refers to the dialectical openness of the agent radically transformed by the first openness. Therefore the agent can be, in Bhaskar's term, 'a radically transformed transformative praxis' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.9), who is, for Levinas, ethical subjectivity.

Chapter 4 Ontology and Otherness: Transcendence

Introduction

In this chapter we turn our attention to the understanding of transcendence in terms of ontology and otherness. We present two contrasting ontological accounts of transcendence: Bhaskar's meta-Reality and a classical Trinitarian account of God. According to Wright (2012, pp.90ff), both accounts are ontologically exclusivist, epistemically exclusivist and soteriologically inclusivist. This chapter aims to show that at the heart of the difference between them is the different understanding of otherness. Therefore, we first present Bhaskar's spiritual turn, which led him to construct meta-Reality, whereby non-duality conceived as ground-state qualities inhere in all beings, but by doing so make impossible a genuine sense of ontology of otherness (Bhaskar 2000, 2002, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). This will be followed by a classical Trinitarian account of God grounded on the conception of personhood, whereby the ontology of otherness is embraced not as an added quality but as constitutive of ontology of the being of God, hence of all beings from their creation. A particular trajectory will be given to this account by referring to McGrath's 'iterative procedures' (McGrath 1999, 2002, 2008, 2009), Gunton's 'the Triune God as Becoming' (Gunton 2001),¹²⁰ and Zizioulas's 'personhood and ontology' (Zizioulas 1985, 2006).

¹²⁰ First published in 1978.

1. Bhaskar's Meta-Reality

1.1. The spiritual turn through *transcendental dialectical critical realism*

We have traced the intellectual trajectory of Bhaskar's ontological journey through the initial establishment of transcendental realism, critical naturalism and his dialectical critical realism. In particular, in his dialectical critical realism he envisages human agency as 'radically transformed transformative praxis', with its emancipatory intentionality that is 'oriented to rationally groundable projects – ultimately flourishing in freedom' (Bhaskar 2008, p.9). This orientation is ultimately attributed to the ontological stratum of ethical alethia implicit in all beings from the beginning, since 'the end is implicit in the beginning' (p.9). Thus one can see that a sense of the ultimate reality or transcendence is already permeating his theory of dialectics, paving a way for further philosophical development. Indeed, Bhaskar make a step further from his dialectical critical realism (DCR) into *spirituality* in order to explore the envisaged project of ultimate flourishing in freedom, which he calls universal Self-realisation or God-realisation: 'the dialectic of critical realism at once prepares the ground for and necessitates its development into *transcendental* dialectical critical realism or philosophy of (universal) Self-realisation (and ultimately of God-realisation)' (Bhaskar 2000, p.21, emphasis original).

Peculiar to this new philosophy is its mood adherent to spirituality; hence the term 'spiritual turn'. Critical responses to Bhaskar's spiritual turn have come particularly from those within the critical realist community who recognise Bhaskar as an adherent of the Marxist tradition, and who focus on the inconsistency with Marxist materialist grounds. For example, Creaven critiques Bhaskar's spiritual turn by alleging that the new philosophy is underpinned by ontological idealism. For Creaven, the ontological idealism is unsustainable and incompatible with the previous stages of critical realism, in which Bhaskar himself takes Marxist dialectical and emergentist materialism as

the true antithesis of idealism (Hartwig 2011). However, it is clear that for Bhaskar his spiritual turn is a response to the implicit demand for Marxist-inspired politics of universal emancipation, if one considers seriously the Marxist formula, 'the free development of each as a condition of the free development of all' (Bhaskar 2010, p.4). Otherwise one will not eventually be free, since

in a real sense, a sense which is very difficult for most people to comprehend, you are not really different from me, but you actually are me. Sure, you are different as an embodied personality from me, but you are also enfolded within me, you are part of me and I am part of you and therefore your pain is as much as my pain. (Bhaskar 2002, p.316)

Bhaskar's spiritual turn is his response to the question once raised by Marx himself, but apparently not given a proper answer: 'Who is going to educate the educators, who is going to empower them, who is going to transform them?' Concerned with the educators, the would-be transformers for universal emancipation, Bhaskar notes that the western approach to emancipation emphasises change outside of self, on outward going so that it becomes at best altruistic for others while leaving the self as unexamined and so unchanged. Turning from the western approach he stresses the need for spiritual upgrading of the self, which can be the source of education of the educators. As such he finds his answer to the question in the aspect of self-transformation or self-realisation, which is typical of a spiritual approach (p.300).¹²¹ Hence, he acknowledges two motives for his spiritual turn: (1) to speak of spirituality or, at least, religion in his critical realist terrain, because (2) without this source the left or the emancipatory project will remain weak.¹²² This indicates that Bhaskar's spiritual turn is deeply related with his concern for the emancipatory project, particularly that of the left in the western approach; but with the recognition of its weakness he

¹²¹ In fact it was Karl Marx himself who 'gave rise to a school of social analysis that excluded the transcendent as a distraction from worldly *praxis*, or simply as an irrelevance'. But Bhaskar reads Marx's question as implying the need for transcendence so that Bhaskar, one of Marx's more recent successors, 'appears to be reintroducing' the notion of transcendence, 'convinced that, if it did not exist, we would be obliged to invent it' (McGrath 2008, p.52).

¹²² He referred to these two motives in his lecture on 'Critical Realism and God' at the Forum on Religious and Spiritual Education held at King's College London on 19th Jan. 2011.

turns to the east (and the north and the south) to seek a powerful retroductive explanation of the totality, which is somehow implicit already in his early works of critical realism and dialectical critical realism, but is now developed in a new philosophy that synthesises self-realisation with spirituality.

As he states:

mutual implication of (a) radical transformative agency; and (b) deep spirituality, brought together relatively early on in the development of critical realism in the conception of transformed transformative praxis ... In practice this means that to be truly spiritual one has to be committed to, and an active agent in, radical transformative processes ... on the realisation of the common ideal of spiritual and secular emancipatory projects ... which ... will necessitate the abolition of the totality of master-slave relationships ... it is important to appreciate that the only form of revolution possible [against capitalism] is a spiritual one; and that anti-capitalism itself presupposes a commitment to spiritual change (i.e. self-development) ... [which in turn] immediately implies commitment to radical transformative action. (Bhaskar 2002a, pp. 225-6)

Before his mature development into meta-Reality, Bhaskar had shown something of his transition to spirituality in his book *From East to West: Odyssey of a Soul* (2000), in which he describes the journey of a soul through successive reincarnation into fifteen lives. While the book takes the form of a semi-autobiographical novella, in it Bhaskar brings forth the core claim of the perennial truth of universal self-realisation of a soul or God. He grounds this claim philosophically by linking God or ultimate reality with the hitherto developed terrain of critical realism, applying the holy trinity of critical realism along with dialectical critical realism in terms of MELD stadia.¹²³ By applying the holy trinity of critical realism, he argues for the ontological realism of God as the object of studies such as theology, for the epistemic relativism of God from the fact of the existence of

¹²³ Hence it is called *transcendental* dialectical critical realism.

religions as either different manifestations of or different interpretations of God, and for the possibility of judgemental rationalism between religions on the basis of the claim for stratification of truth between the higher truth and ordinary truth.¹²⁴ With regard to dialectical critical realism, God is, at 1M degree, conceived as the ultimate stratum of reality through the affirmation of categorial and dispositional realism. Bhaskar insists on 'the transcendental reality of the categories prior to and independently of any knowledge or account of them' because 'realism about being ... includes, and indeed ultimately depends upon, realism about categories – categorial realism'. Our epistemic grasp of categories 'is also real but it is not what it is about, even when it is correct. The epistemic is constellationally contained within being' (p.34). We can see here that Bhaskar assigns categorial realism the status of alethic truth, since alethic truth is not necessarily justified by a realist way because it goes beyond the 'real'; it is not necessarily confined truth at 1M degree, but also goes beyond this in the sense of its very original and ultimate teleological meaning, which sets beings on their tendential directionality toward the realisation of the implicit alethic truth (Hartwig 2007, pp.26-29). Thus, with categorial realism he asserts that categories are 'not merely human constructs, but rather substantial ontological realities inherent in the fabric of the universe', of which God is 'the ultimate 'categorial structure of the world', the 'causally and taxonomically irreducible' ground and alethic truth of being, 'on which the rest of being is unilaterally existentially dependent'' (Wright 2012, p.21; Bhaskar 2000, p.40).¹²⁵ The ultimate structures of the universe, however, 'exist as potential awaiting future actualisation and realisation' because, it is asserted, this is the dispositional realism, that ontic, epistemic and logical possibility is prior over actuality ('actual objects and events were once potential') as being is prior over action ('forces must exist in order to cause') and self over agency ('persons must exist in order to act'). Again one can see that the priority of potentiality of the dispositional realism reflects the idea of alethic truth which allows the realism of the ultimate

¹²⁴ Drawing on an ancient Indian philosopher, Adi Shankara (788-820), he claims for the stratification of truth and applies it in understanding the phenomenon of multi religions. Based on this claim he rejects any exclusive religion as unquism while encouraging inter-faith, intra-faith and even extra-faith dialogue for searching for a higher truth (Bhaskar's lecture on 'Critical Realism and God').

¹²⁵ Wright, A. (2012) *Christianity and Critical Realism: Ambiguity, Truth and Theological Literacy* (forthcoming; book manuscript privately circulated with permission to be used as a reference for this thesis).

potentiality to be realised. Hence, for Bhaskar, God is defined as ‘both the ultimate categorial structure of being and the ultimate potentiality’ (Wright 2012, p.21).

In spite of the implicit ingrained-ness of God in beings, there is always a certain type of ‘absence’ in the level of the embodied world, such as lack, ideology, or illusion, which is called demi-real. This absence denotes the incompleteness of the world, and hence necessitates a developmental process or epistemological learning process toward completeness.¹²⁶ Such absence is the motor of the learning process, which can be seen as a kind of the process of transformative negation at 2E, which will be integrated within the terrain of 3L of holistic causality of totality, where all beings are understood as constellationally interrelated through all the levels: material (biological), psychic, social and now the spiritual level. Through the process within the holistic relation, the dialectic of desire to freedom conducted by a concretely singularised (specific and uniquely individuated) person may entrain a further dialectic process toward universal emancipation if the person acts spontaneously according to his real nature (which Bhaskar calls *dharma*), in which Godlikeness is ingrained. This is because, in this account, the process is understood as a self-determination that connotes ‘at once (individual) autonomy and universal flourishing or eudaimonia – i.e. the free development of each as a condition of the free development of all’. This indicates the transformative praxis of agent at 4D; however, this time it stresses the question of ‘who am I?’, a question about identity (the alethic identity) and agency, because the greater the learning about the true nature of oneself, the greater the possibility of right agentive action, and because ‘[u]ltimately the dialectic of self-realisation ushers in a dialectic of *God-realisation*’ (Bhaskar 2000, pp.3-4 emphasis original).¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Drawing on the eastern religious traditions, he describes this process in terms of ‘the interconnected triad of *reincarnation*, *karma* – or ‘quantum (or holistic) natural law’ – and *moksha*, or liberation’ (Bhaskar 2000, p.3 emphasis original).

¹²⁷ Later, the spiritual turn and its philosophical articulation through transcendental dialectical critical realism as seen in the type of MELD explanation enable Bhaskar to extend MELD stadia to MELDA by adding 5A, which is the aspect of spirituality or ‘the spiritual aspect presupposed by emancipatory projects, whether secular or religious, and which deepened the other four stadia as well’ (Bhaskar 2002b, p.xix).

According to this account, 'man is essentially God' in his deep structure, 'already essentially free, even now already enlightened' (p.41), while the notion of God is still conceived as ontologically immanent as the inner urge of human being but not saturated by concrete singularity, and at the same time as ontologically transcendent as the ultimate reality but not exhausted by human being. Here we can see two senses of transcendence: '[first] the moment of transcendence, that is the move to a greater totality which resolves a contradiction ... In this process of transcendence (in the relative sense) to a greater totality, [second] transcendence (in the absolute sense) plays the key role' (Bhaskar 2002a, p.231). Thus Bhaskar's spiritual turn can be seen as an explanation of the transcendental movement of a concretely singularised person toward the fuller realisation of God or his ingrained Godlike nature; hence it is a retroductive explanation of human being from its real nature, the very substratum of its reality in that God is ingrained implicitly; an explanation of human being in terms of its movement toward God-realisation, toward its ultimate goal. Therefore, as Wright points out, '[i]f dialectical critical realism opens up the possibility of self-transcendence through transformative action, then transcendental dialectical critical realism identifies the ultimate goal of human self-transcendence as the experience of identity with God', in that 'man is essentially God's self-realisation *is* God-realisation' (Wright 2012, pp.21-22; Bhaskar 2000, p.ix emphasis original).

With reference to the key argument of this thesis, regarding the agential centredness explanation of critical realism and the consequent lacuna of otherness, it should be pointed out here that the philosophical grounding of transcendence or God in the transcendental dialectical critical realism shares the same characteristics we have seen in earlier stages of critical realism. Two points are particularly relevant here. First, it is noticeable that agential agency is the very locus of the unilateral process of self-realisation. The merging point of two senses of transcendence is the agency of the self who acts out of its inner urge for the realisation of its true nature (*dharma*), which is gradually awakened during the process of transformative negation or absencing of absence (*karma*), even if this takes place over more than one life (*reincarnation*). This transfactual quality of the self or

its ultimate qualities over successive reincarnations is therefore like what Bhaskar calls tendency, delineated in his fundamental tenet of transcendental realism. Once conceived as such, it is not difficult to reach the second point, that the philosophy of self-realisation is based on transcendental realism, so that it shares the very characteristic features of agential centredness of TR as defined in Chapters 1 and 2: God, while categorically independent from man, is at the same time 'implicit' in, hence part 'of' man (in Bhaskar's term 'ingrained'); man's directionality is one of 'being-to-becoming' (self-realisation); and relationships are identified with circumstance or the people around in terms of solidarity toward upgrading of their lives to the point of spirituality where they may reclaim and re-enchant their lives to become what they truly are. Given the agential centredness of self-realisation up to the point of God-realisation we can see the same pattern of ontological priority of *self* over *the other* so that it produces the lacuna of ontology of genuine otherness. Though the causal efficacy of the other upon oneself as an external aspect is recognised, the explanation of the transcendental movement is fundamentally and essentially attributed to the agential powers out of one's innermost urge, so that the other is eventually recognised either as a person with whom I should develop a relationship of solidarity, or as a person who has his own Godlike nature. In the first case, the other is only found with his significance in the extension of my dialectical self-realisation; that is, the other is found from my approach to the other or in extension of a dialectic of desire to freedom for the other through perspectival switch (at 2E), since the other is essentially related with the self in the sense of holistic totality (at 3L). Hence self is the initiative, the first movement and the priority, while the other remains as secondary or relative (compared with the absolute of self), absorbed into the relation of the self. In the latter case, the other is understood as an authentic self defined by the same categorial and dispositional realism so that the same pattern of the agential centredness is applied to him. Hence in both cases the priority is given to self, while there is a lacuna of genuine sense of otherness. This leads to another crucial point of Bhaskar's spirituality. By focusing on the innermost nature of the self, while taking the other as secondary or relative, the spirituality of the self-realisation stresses on 'awakening' of what is already implicit through agential transformative

action negation, rather than on what is filled from the other or on the Other who is 'overflowing' me with her face and otherness so that the overflowing pushes the self into a dialectic of ethical life, as we have seen in Levinas. In the next section, we will attend to such spirituality of awakening.

1.2. Meta-Reality

After the philosophical underlabouring of spirituality in the transcendental dialectical critical realism, however, Bhaskar identified two related unsatisfactory or limited points of the spiritual position with regard to responses he received from dialogue with both religious and non-religious people. He found that (1) most religious practitioners seemed to understand the transcendent reality featured in his spiritual turn as a way of referring to a particular God such as Allah or Brahman, which (2) for non-religious or atheist people is not appropriate, to the point that they become reluctant to talk about spirituality at all.¹²⁸ This led him to develop a philosophy of meta-Reality, in which he attempts to articulate the ultimate non-dual state of spirituality or God in a secular way by replacing it with ground-state and cosmic envelope on the base of 'the first principle' of transcendental realism. Hence his meta-reality is characterised as '*spiritual exposition of being*' at the level of 1M of ontology (Bhaskar 2002a, pp.191-192). Here non-duality (or non-dual state of being such as freedom, love, creativity and spontaneous right action) is formulated as a key concept, since it is that which sustains the world of duality (unhappiness, contradiction, split, alienation) (Bhaskar 2002a, p.52; Hartwig 2007, p.150), and is accessible or acquired to a certain degree by the transcendental self, because non-duality is implicit in a person as ground-state quality constituting the deep interior or interior fine structure of that person (Bhaskar 2002b, pp.x-xi). Hence, Bhaskar claims that spirituality or transcendence is no longer confined to a presupposition of religion and emancipatory projects, but is also considered as a presupposition of ordinary life whereby the self

¹²⁸ Bhaskar's lecture on 'Critical Realism and God' at the Forum on Religious and Spiritual Education held at King's College London on 19th Jan. 2011.

exercises its agency through transcendental identification with its true nature. The stress on the everydayness of transcendence and transcendental identification puts the role of transcendental agency at the centre of the everyday experience of non-duality since 'transcendental identification [implying shedding of what is inconsistent with ground-state] and transcendental agency are seen to be necessary features of all social interactions' through which non-duality is assessed and experienced (Bhaskar 2002b, pp.xii-xiii). This enables us to present Bhaskar's meta-Reality in a way that is consistent with the key argument of agential centredness as seen in the previous chapters. Therefore in this section, Bhaskar's meta-Reality is introduced in terms of a triad feature of the primary mode of being as 'implicit', agential centredness and transformative negation by drawing on three modalities (ground-state, transcendence, the fine structure or deep interior) and three mechanisms (transcendental identification, reciprocity, co-presence) of non-duality. Hence they will be non-duality (as being implicit), which causes agency to transcend its incompleteness (as agential centredness) through transcendental identification including shedding (as a form of transformative negation and praxis). Let us begin by considering the implicit nature of non-duality.

In his explanation of the diachronic development of critical realism Bhaskar provides a critical description of the five phases of the philosophy of discourse of modernity (including post-modernism) and their contradictions - lack, split and alienation - which indicate that the world is the world of duality (Bhaskar 2002a).¹²⁹ Duality that can be seen for example in inconsistency or

¹²⁹ Bhaskar distinguishes five phases of the philosophy of discourse of modernity:

- (a) The Classical Philosophy of Discourse of Modernity (CDM): as 'initiated with the classical English and French bourgeois revolutions of 1640-1660 and 1789' respectively,
- (b) High-Modernism (HM): with 'its heyday between the revolutions of 1848 and 1917',
- (c) The Theory and Practise of Modernisation: as 'associated with the revolutionary watersheds of 1945, the end of the second world war, and 1947, the symbolically and practically significant de-colonisation and partition of India',
- (d) Post-modernism: from 'the time of the revolutionary upsurge of 1968',
- (e) Western (Bourgeois) Triumphalism: 'in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc (1989-1991)'.

The incompleteness of these phases is characterised by terms such as 'egocentricity' and 'false abstract universality' (of CDM), 'the incomplete totality lack' and 'lack of reflexivity' (of CDM as critiqued by HM), 'substitutionism' (of HM), 'unilinearity', 'judgementalism' and 'disenchantment' (as appeared in the universalising tendencies of PDM in the phase of modernisation), 'loss of interconnectedness and the unity of humanity' and 'anti-realism' (of post-modernism), 'formalist and functionalist' (instrumental modes of reasoning), 'particular form of materialism (denying and underestimating the role of ideas and consciousness

contradiction between theory/practice, object/subject, fact/value, material/spiritual, or East/West. However he also notes that there have been emancipatory thoughts throughout the world, whether religious or secular, that have enabled people to attempt to overcome such duality, although in a limited way. Hence he claims for the realism of the fundamental level of reality which generates those emancipatory thoughts over different time and space, because '[a]ll emancipatory thought has to presuppose in some way the actuality, the inherent existence (albeit in an unfulfilled state) *now*, of what could be' (p. 89). He delineates a transcendental realism of the essential structure of emancipatory thought, which he calls the non-dual state of being or simply non-duality, which generates all forms of possibilities of emancipation so that the world of duality, despite the dominance of the actual forms of incompleteness, can be sustained and dependent upon it.¹³⁰ Thus Bhaskar states the characteristic argument of the philosophy of meta-Reality that 'the world [of duality] is only sustained by a world of non-duality which is its infrastructure, more than its support (and much more than a refuge or compensation), but its very basis and condition' (p.59).¹³¹ Notable in this argument is that the fundamental possibility or potentiality is ultimately found 'within a being', 'within in us' in terms of non-duality, which inevitably renders the unilateral direction of emancipation in the form of the realisation or expansion of what is truly within us. In Bhaskar's words: '[t]he possibility of human emancipation depends upon expanding the zone of non-duality within our lives' (p.11). This implicitness of non-duality in human being and all beings and its realisation (directionality) through transformative negation is delineated in his explanation of three modalities and three mechanisms of non-duality.

hence in geo-history) and 'ontological monovalence' (of PDM in general) (Bhaskar 2002a, pp.167-173). For more details, see Chapters 1, 3, and 4.

¹³⁰ So, Bhaskar states: 'the tacit presupposition of all these negative social structures, whether they be capitalism, whether they be war, is the spontaneous good nature of our own inner selves, operating from the ground-state, our spontaneous creativity, our natural love, our willingness to trust other beings' (Bhaskar 2002a, p.152).

¹³¹ This indicates the characteristic form of argument of the philosophy of meta-Reality, that is, it 'depends upon the necessary presupposition of the true by the false, the good by the evil, love by hate, creativity by regimentation/mechanisation, etc., freedom by heteronomy (oppression or servitude, etc.), non-duality by duality, enchantment by disenchantment'. He calls this 'unilateral dependency' because 'the false or emergent or heteronomous level could not exist without the true or more essential or autonomous level, but that level of truth, freedom, etc. could exist without the emergent heteronomous level' (Bhaskar 2002a, p.203).

The first modality of non-duality is *ground-state*. Based on the transcendental realist argument of the stratified nature of reality, Bhaskar argues for a foundational level, called being's ground-state: 'a basic level of being, characterised by the properties necessary for any being to be at all, ... upon which all other levels depend' (p.11). Thus the necessary properties or ground-state qualities are considered as 'the ultimate ingredient of all other states of being, activity and consciousness'. Human beings, when they are in the ground-state, are defined by virtue of their implicit potential for creativity, love and right action (Bhaskar 2002b, p. x).¹³² However, these qualities are not defined as an individual property but as the ultimate ingredient of all beings, which makes it possible for beings to connect with each other '[b]ecause we are living in one world, one cosmos, we must be connected in some way with each other and with all beings in that cosmos' (p.229). This reminds us of the notion of constellational connectivity (or internal relationality), a key aspect in dialectical critical realism; now, in meta-Reality Bhaskar presents clearly what it is that makes possible the ultimate or fundamental connectivity in terms of ultimate ingredients at the ground-state of being for all beings. This leads to the notion of *cosmic envelope*. These ground-state qualities are differentiated according to the process of stratification, emergence and disposition of concrete singularised beings, but they are connected 'up to the ground-states qualities of other human beings and indeed beings generally through ... the *cosmic-envelope*' (Bhaskar 2002a, p.12 emphasis original).

The second modality of non-duality comprises certain aspects of *transcendence*, which are understood as 'essential to constitution and reproduction of everyday life' and, hence, through which non-duality sustains or grounds the realm of duality (Bhaskar 2002b, p.x). Generally in meta-Reality, transcendence means 'the move to greater completeness in all learning process and indeed all aspects of our lives (self-transcendence)'. This can be achieved by an indispensable feature of everyday life, viz. *transcendental identification in consciousness* 'with our real self, an object or

¹³² From this Bhaskar points out the possibility of development of the ground-state qualities of humanity in a relatively *a priori* fashion (Bhaskar 2002a, p.11).

person, our agency (absorption in what we are doing), or others in collective work, thereby losing our false sense of ourselves as separate and isolated' (Hartwig 2007, p.234). Hence, the movement is between ground-state as the field of intrinsic possibility and our embodied personality as the field of articulation of the former; or it is a dialectical process of realisation (transformation) of the former in the field of the latter (Bhaskar 2002a, p.91).

This links to the second component of our triad of meta-Reality: *agential centredness*. Bhaskar provides a three-fold sense of self: ego, embodied personality and transcendental self, of which 'the point of agency is always that of the embodied personality' (p.220). Ego is a sense that 'apprehends itself as existing separately from other ... and asserts itself against an object world' (p.71), so it does not 'refer or correspond or reflect or pick out anything in the world' because it defines itself as separated from others, whether structures or people (p.77). This ego is a construction of a kind of ideology of 'a subjective point and rationale' (p.75). However, 'no one is separate from other beings ... [because] [t]he social structure is *inherent* within us'. Hence 'to be is to be related, so to be is to be geo-historical' (p.113, emphasis original). Ego, in this sense, is an illusion, but it is real in so far as it is causally efficacious, so that it is defined as *demi-real*. Human beings as embodied personalities are 'complex, relationally defined and constituted entities, themselves stratified, differentiated and changing – constituents of ... *relative reality*' (p.71 emphasis original), 'limited and bounded and perspectively variable' according to their disposition (p.78); and are 'relative, transient and contextual reality' (p. 194). Transcendental real self is what lies beneath such embodied personalities as 'the source of their causal agency and powers' (p.71) and it is, according to the principle of cosmic envelope, 'continuous with and connected to all other selves and other things generally and indeed to all of creation' (p.78). Thus it is alethic self and is equivalent with being's ground-state (Bhaskar 2002b, p.x). Compared with changeable embodied personality, transcendental real self 'endures ... is manifest most of the time only in the context of a totality in which it is both dominated and occluded by elements other than itself' (Bhaskar 2002a, p.194). Human being is a mixture of ego, embodied personality and transcendental self. Now, if

transcendence is the movement toward greater completeness, it is only possible by action of the agent of embodied personality, but in order to make a change (movement) it is necessary to change first the intentional action of the agent to be consistent with its ground-state. 'So all change depends ultimately on self-change; and all action depends ultimately on self-action' (p. 100). When considering human being as a four-planar social being, prioritising self-change will be a crucial step for 'transformation at all planes of social being including the most deeply sedimented social structure' (pp.112-113). In other words, action oriented to self-change is necessary for emancipation of all (p.223). Hence, the embodied self or agency is the locus or default position of change not only for himself but also for universal self-realisation (pp.220-221), and this agency is the radically transformed transformative praxis in DCR. Bhaskar calls this priority of agential action the primacy of self-referentiality (p.147). At this point it should be noted that the theme of primacy of self-referentiality can only be justified on the basis of the prior establishment of ground-state which is implicit in all beings. Thus to change agent's action rightly means to change it to be maximally coherent with and spontaneously following from the ground-state (p.104). According to this account, therefore, it can be said that we have both the possibility of transcendence, which is the ultimate causal power of ground-state, and the agency of the realisation of the possibility, which is the agential role of embodied self. Simply saying we have what (transcendence) and who (agency), however, still leaves the question of 'how' the agent can make self-change and universal-realisation, or how the agent can be related or connected with the ground-state and the other beings.

With regard to the question of 'how', we refer now to the third modality of non-duality, which is the fine structure of deep interior of being (or consciousness), and three mechanisms of non-duality (transcendental identification, reciprocity and co-presence). The fine interior is a necessary condition or constituent of all human life, which can be revealed with its qualities of 'bliss, emptiness, suchness, rich identity, or pure unbounded energised love'. But how can those qualities be revealed? Or how can we have such a moment of being in a non-dual state? Bhaskar's answer is that we do so by 'going deep enough' into it (Bhaskar 2002b, p.xi): 'As we dig down to our ground-

state, become more attuned (or in tune) with it, the more self-aware we become, the more we expand our capacity to change the world' (Bhaskar 2002a, p.228). Because the agent has already the possibility within itself, no-one else can get it for him; he must search for it himself *until* he reaches a moment of 'eureka', like the moment of Platonic anamnesis. It is possible because the ground-state qualities are 'already there implicitly, enfolded, encoded, as a possibility of manifesting in ... consciousness. ... it is only implicit' (Bhaskar 2002a, p.230). That is why Bhaskar stresses transcendental identification in consciousness not only with one's true self but also with other beings; at first it might be a weak consistency with objects, but increasingly we may come together with them until the moment of collapse of the subject-object duality, like a moment of agreement in communication with the other (Bhaskar 2002b, p.229). At this point the second characteristic way of reaching the non-dual state should be recognised along with the 'going deep enough', viz. 'shedding'. As we go deep into the real self we find elements of heteronomy which block freedom, which are unfulfilled and split intentionality rooted in desire. Here the desire form itself is considered as the inner root of incompleteness, like contradictions and constraints to freedom:¹³³

It is the desire form itself which prevents and limits our freedom, not the constraints on the satisfaction of our desires, and when we see that it is the desire itself that imposes the constraints, not our environment, then there is nothing more in the physical world which is constraining. There are no constraints without desires. (Bhaskar 2002a, p.62)

Desire is what is attached to the real self, hence Bhaskar calls it attachment, acquired because we were born into '[t]he world of attachment, the world driven by desire for material goods, the world of commodification' (pp.13, 59). As it is attached, hence the resolution is to relinquish desire and to give up what is inconsistent with the true self, that is, to shed the attachment (pp.62-

¹³³ Bhaskar distinguishes two forms of incompleteness: negative incompleteness as marked by illusion, error and cruelty, and positive incompleteness as the absence of total development, which involves 'intrinsically the potentiality for further development' (Bhaskar 2002a, p.61).

63). Previously, he understood desire in relation to absence, then argued for the dialectics of desire to freedom by transformative negation of absencing absence toward universal realisation. Likewise, at this juncture the philosophy of meta-Reality accounts for a dialectic of liberation in a two-fold sense: the dialectics of shedding and the dialectics of development and realisation, which are conceived as asymmetrically related to each other in the sense that the latter cannot come before the former. Moreover, as in the case of dialectical critical realism, self-realisation is conceived as naturally linked to universal self-realisation, since the self-realisation, through shedding, is argued as ‘immediately and automatically’ taking us ‘in to a conatus, that is a drive, oriented to the self-realisation of every other being in the universe’ (p.53). Hence ethics here, as in his *Dialectics*, is conceived as a natural kind in the sense that it is originated in agential action of the self for shedding and its self-realisation.¹³⁴

Transcendental identification is followed, at a deeper level, by the principles of *reciprocity* and *co-presence*, which are the second and the third mechanisms of non-duality. In fact, all three mechanisms work in a way that increases the degree of internal relationality of totality. Reciprocity means that ‘the connection is already becoming an internal one’ as the result of engagement with both oneself, in the way of attainment, and the others in the ways of attraction and repulsion. At this level of reciprocity, the relationship with oneself and with the others begins to be defined as a part of the being, particularly a part of the embodied personality, so it is said that ‘a being is at once *concretely singular* and at the same time *dialectically universal*’ (Bhaskar 2002b, pp.224-227 emphasis original).¹³⁵ When it goes deeply enough, to the limit of completely universal reciprocity, it

¹³⁴ In the previous chapter it was argued that Bhaskarian ethics presupposes a natural connection between individual freedom and universal freedom in that ethics is conceived as a natural kind generated by the self. However, by bringing Levinasian otherness into the account, it was argued that ethics cannot be conceived as such a natural kind of oneself. Rather it happens and is inscribed by the engagement with the other. Moreover ethics presupposes an asymmetric relation between I and the other in that one should give up its freedom for the other, i.e. giving one’s bread out of its mouth for the other in spite of starvation. Ethics, according to Levinas, is in nature in the form of ‘despite oneself’, not in the form of ‘I then you’ as in Bhaskar.

¹³⁵ It stresses the starting point of change or the locus of change, termed the primacy of self-referentiality, which is linked to universal emancipation according to the principle of co-presence, as will be seen shortly. From this point of view Bhaskar refutes the misconstruction of individual voluntarism upon the agency (Bhaskar 2002c, p.70).

reaches generalised synchronicity, whereby there is *co-presence*, meaning ‘the enfolding of another entity within the being of some entity’ (p.230). It is worth noting that in the first book on meta-Reality Bhaskar defines the notion of co-presence as a state of being, such that ‘each is already implicit or enfolded in the other’ (Bhaskar 2002a, p.12), but in the second book he focuses on agential action or movement reaching at the state (Bhaskar 2002b). Thus co-presence can be understood not simply as an idea state in somewhere, but as a real level of state that can be reached only by agent’s right-action. Here we can see the characteristic feature of the intrinsic connection between ontology of co-presence and agential centredness: if, therefore, the agent can go deeply enough into the state of ‘completely generalised co-presence then all beings will be enfolded in any one being’ (p.230).

Before arriving at the 5A (fifth aspect) of spirituality, Bhaskar had defined being as a becoming of our being through agential action, or thinking being in the action of transcendental identification in consciousness.¹³⁶ However, at the state of co-presence being or reality is re-theorised with two additional stadia: 6R (sixth realm) of *re-enchantment* and 7Z/A (seventh zone/aspect) of *non-duality or awakening*;¹³⁷ being as a moment of a being being or a being of being, that is, a moment of non-dual state or a moment of awakening which is ‘what is required to bring out or complete our understanding of the fifth aspect, which must lead to notions of enlightenment or self-realisation and emancipation, leading ultimately to universal self-realisation’ (p.xx). Putting all these together, Bhaskar’s ontology of being is delineated as MELDARZ, then MELDARA (p.xix), in that ‘awakening’ of what is within us (spontaneity, creativity, love etc.) is proposed as the final destination of being not in the sense of endism but in the sense that it always remains as a

¹³⁶ Bhaskar argues for ‘omnipresence of consciousness’ or ‘implicit nature of cosmos’ from the possibility or capacity of human being of transcendental identification with everything in consciousness (Bhaskar 2002a, p.143, 214).

¹³⁷ According to Bhaskar, 6R of re-enchantment ‘designates not only the realm of the ... para-normal or supernatural ... also ... the typical domain of religion, whereas 7Z/A designates that of spirituality’. This indicates that spirituality is in a deeper level than that of religion, so that he claims that ‘one can be spiritual without religious practice’ (Bhaskar 2002b, p.xxi). This is consistent with the distinction he made previously, between the higher truth and the ordinary truth.

potentiality, rendering the ever-openness of embodied life to this direction through agential action of shedding and transcendental identification. Hence the world of embodiment is the locus of change in the sense that a moment of awakening can be experienced, though it is very difficult since 'we are barely aware of most that is unfolded within us'. Despite the difficulty of awakening, however, there are awakened potentials in the form of powers such as 'knowledge, virtues or skills', and when we exercise them sufficiently in daily life until they become primed for action, then these powers become what may be called *tendencies* (necessities) as described in transcendental realism in Bhaskar's first book *A Realist Theory of Science* (p.230).

1.3. A critical reflection: The logical structure of transcendence, Awakening (7A) and incommensurability

Bhaskar's philosophy of meta-Reality has been described as a triad form of explanatory frame, brought forward from the argument on previous stages of critical realism: the primary mode of being as implicit, agential centredness and transformative negation, which in turn explain ground-state qualities, co-presence and non-duality, the agential role of embodied personality in transcendental identification, and awakening and shedding, respectively. After the long journey to meta-Reality, we have come back to the initial point of 'tendency'. The thesis began by considering tendency as the crucial concept of transcendental realism, in that a central characteristic feature of its ontology is that the primary mode of being is 'implicit'. This crucial feature was attributed to the thoroughgoing standpoint of the explanatory form of agential centredness in that the central role of the agency is defined with the transformative praxis in forms of negation (shedding) and realisation. Subsequently it has been shown that the intrinsically related triad penetrates all stages of critical realism up to Bhaskar's latest philosophy, of meta-Reality. Therefore it can be said that the intrinsic relationship between the three components of the triad reveals the very logical structure of

transcendence in meta-Reality, but also the whole project of critical realism. The logical structure is that *Bhaskarian critical realism, from the first to the last, is based on and dependent on the crucial aspect of his ontology that defines the primary mode of being as 'implicit' as tendencies (necessities), which entrain the necessity of the transformative agency whose action is characteristically transformative negation for awakening.*

However, as argued previously from the point of view of Levinasian philosophy, it does not capture or put weight on the crucial dimension of otherness (the non-agential dimension) in its ontology, so that in the dialectical development it remains in a form of dialectics with characteristic lacuna of otherness, which can only envisage a single dialectical openness of being in terms of 'being to becoming', while unable to grasp the double openness captured from Levinasian otherness in terms of 'coming to being' (openness opened by the other), then 'being to becoming' (dialectical openness of the opened agency). The single dialectical openness seems to be all the more so in the philosophy of meta-Reality because there is no genuine sense of otherness or alterity, due to the ultimate connectivity of all beings with each other and the ultimate sameness of all beings enfolded together at the level of the ground-state and co-presence. Moreover it does not allow, rather is critical of, any notion of imposed or heteronomously given salvation or redemption as in some other religious traditions (Bhaskar 2002a, p.226). This means there is no genuine significance of the other to emancipation; instead it claims emancipation as coming only from within. This again is attributed to the primary aspect of ontology and its consequent overwhelming connectivity of all.

At this juncture, the final feature, of awakening (7A), attracts our attention. Awakening here is a connotative concept which implies both the presupposition of what is to be awakened within the self and the ways of awakening, such as shedding, filling and realising. What is stressed in both is that the *self-transformation* in that agency is not only the locus of change but is itself autonomous

and deterministic for its realisation.¹³⁸ Awakening therefore is about self-transformative efforts within the stratified self, in that any notion of heteronomously given salvation is fundamentally unacceptable, hence incommensurable. Such notion of heteronomous salvation is refuted as uniqueness for its blocking of the higher truth; in particular, the exclusive truth claim of certain religions such as Christianity is charged with uniqueness. Drawing on an ancient Hindu philosopher, Shankara, Bhaskar makes a distinction between the higher truth and the ordinary truth, in that the former 'sees all religions as so many different paths to the absolute', while the latter 'proclaims a monopoly truth' that espouses uniqueness (Bhaskar & Hartwig 2010, p.151). On this basis, he advocates the possibility of spirituality, as the higher truth, without exercise of religious practices (as the ordinary truth) and his philosophy of meta-Reality can be seen as an attempt at an inclusive conceptual articulation of the higher truth in that he theorises transcendence as the presupposition of both religion and everyday life. Hence he claims that 'the time for the higher truth to become the ordinary truth has arrived' (p.151). The connotative concept of awakening indicates both the higher truth quality with the ultimate potentiality within us, and the possibility of access in ordinary life through exercising self-transformative and self-deterministic efforts.

However, as construed from Levinasian otherness, there might be another significant aspect, rather than the self or even prior to the contentiously deterministic self. If this is the case then it implies that the incommensurability between the connotative concept of awakening and the concept of heteronomous salvation entails the necessity that we identify the philosophy of meta-Reality as a particular case rather than a higher truth case. This point is explored in Wright's critical reading of Bhaskarian critical realism. Wright traces the roots of Bhaskar's spiritual turn then shows that Bhaskar's claim of 'the higher truth' is advocated in terms of the notion of perennial wisdom, which is itself 'a particular product of emergence of modernity in the West, rather than a product of primal mystical encounters that pre-date all religious traditions'. By examining a close relationship

¹³⁸ Wright considers this point as a specific ontological assumption of human being as ultimately good and autonomous. But he points out that this assumption as a production of modernity is highly questionable and indeterminate. See, for details, Wright 2012, pp.98f.

between the New Age movement and Theosophy,¹³⁹ both rooted in nineteenth century Romanticism, Wright reveals how the notion of perennial wisdom was constructed as the source of a personal spirituality against Christian exclusivism, and also shows its comfortable connection to a democratic liberal economy in the guise of the claim that ‘human beings are free and equal, then they must have free and equal access to spiritual truth’ (Wright 2012, pp.22f).¹⁴⁰ Hence Bhaskar’s position is highly compatible with religious pluralism and theological inclusivism, while it rejects religious exclusivism as unquism.¹⁴¹ However, Wright critiques this position on the basis of the holy trinity of critical realism. Ontologically, in its affirmation of ontology, meta-Reality necessarily excludes the ontological commitments of all the religious traditions or admits them only for their epistemic value to the higher truth (pp.92ff); epistemologically, with indifference to the inevitability of the cultural-specificity of all religions, including meta-Reality itself,¹⁴² Bhaskar’s position ‘is vulnerable to the charge of committing epistemic fallacy by forcing realistic spiritual truth claims into a liberal democratic polity’ (p.92). Hence Bhaskar actually ‘affirms a single, particular and exclusive path to God’ (p.94), while colonising others in the single liberal frame, ‘ignoring fundamental difference in

¹³⁹ Bhaskar acknowledges the influence of these two positions upon the development of his thought (Bhaskar & Hartwig 2010, p.6f).

¹⁴⁰ For a deeper explanation of the meaning of the perennial wisdom explored by Wright, see the quote below: This perennial wisdom was seen as the primal source of all spiritual and religious traditions, a fact that those religious traditions which claim exclusive possession of spiritual truth – pre-eminently, at the time of the European Renaissance, the Christian tradition – were accused of seeking to suppress. However, the suggestion that the world’s religious traditions emerged from a common perennial spiritual wisdom rooted in mystical experience is not supported by the historical evidence. A more powerful hypothesis is that belief in a perennial wisdom is a product of counter-cultural attempts to secure a personal spiritual life apart from organised religion by actively resisting the hegemony of Christianity. It is possible to trace a historical lineage of such attempts from the Renaissance, through nineteenth century romanticism, to the contemporary New Age movement. In its modern guise, the notion of a perennial wisdom accessible to all sits comfortably with a democratic liberal economy: if all human beings are free and equal, then they must have free and equal access to spiritual truth. (Wright 2012, p.22f)

¹⁴¹ Bhaskar’s critique of religious exclusivism can be seen in a sequence of three stages: (1) the distinction between the open universal stance of religious pluralism and the closed parochial stance of religious exclusivism in that the former is construed with potentiality of serving for all while the latter with potentiality of serving the interest of a particular religious group, (2) hence the former as expanding human freedom while the latter as constraining freedom and (3) the former as engendering tolerance while the latter as breeding intolerance (Wright 2012, p.95f).

¹⁴² Through the process of bracketing of prior commitments with universality and neutrality, Bhaskar privileges his position with neutrality while ascribing others, particularly Christianity, as parochialism. But this position is representative of a specific tradition, ‘that of Enlightenment Project’. Therefore, it appears ‘to contradict the principle of epistemic relativism, which insists that all knowledge is necessarily contextual and grounded in parochial cultural contexts’ (Wright 2012, p.96).

favour of an economy of “sameness” (p.101). This economy of sameness debilitates judgemental rationality between different accounts. In fact, as Wright points out, Bhaskar’s position may ‘cut across the grain of judgemental rationality’, and ‘imply judgemental relativism’, stemmed from the fundamental assumption of ‘*an analogue between God and nature*’ (pp.88-89, emphasis added), which is identified in this thesis in terms of the key premise of his ontology that the primary mode of being is ‘implicit’. This all leads to the point that Bhaskar’s meta-Reality is a particular, cultural-specific account of the absolute, but is still ontologically, epistemologically and soteriologically exclusivist so that it is to a certain degree incommensurable with other accounts, particularly with other religiously exclusive accounts. This renders the possibility to attempt to seek an account of the absolute or God otherwise than through meta-Reality, while retaining crucial aspects of critical realism, hence remaining within a broad sense of critical realism.¹⁴³

Therefore, in the next section we will attempt to provide the Christian Trinitarian account of God as a greater explanatory model, because it takes account of the ontological distinctiveness and significance of otherness, which has been seen as a characteristic lacuna in meta-Reality. We will draw out a particular feature of Christian Trinitarian relation, viz. ‘overflowing’, which is remarkably different from the ‘negation and awakening’ of meta-Reality.

2. Trinitarian God

This section will explore the Trinitarian account of God. This account is suggested as a better critical realist explanation of God than Bhaskarian meta-Reality with regard to the ontological dimension of otherness because, as will be seen, ontological otherness is crucial to the classical Trinitarian account of God, which is radically distinct from panentheist accounts of God or transcendence, including Bhaskar’s meta-Reality. The section does not aim to provide a full account

¹⁴³ It is worth bearing in mind Porpora’s point that Bhaskar’s spiritual turn is not the spiritual turn of critical realism but it is *his* spiritual turning of critical realism in a specific way.

of Trinitarian theology; rather it will be limited to highlighting the capacity of the classical Trinitarian account to embrace the dimension of otherness. To do so it will draw from Alistair McGrath, T.F. Torrance and John Zizioulas, and particularly from the central notions found in their works: the iterative procedure, the *homoousion* and personhood as hypostasis, respectively.

2.1. Christian theology and critical realism (iterative procedure and methodological reverse) – Paving a way to the Trinitarian account of God

There have been two sources for talking about Christianity in a broad sense of critical realism: one is found in dialogue within critical realist groups and the other in a tradition of theological critical realism, which developed largely independently of critical realism until they came together recently (Shipway 2000).¹⁴⁴ In both cases there is a dividing point in the dialogue with regard to the understanding of God. For example, in a joint book project about God, the well-known Christian critical realists, Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier and Douglas Porpora kept their commitment to a specific tradition of Christianity, while Bhaskar withdrew himself from the project on the grounds that ‘the critical issue dividing them was that of God’s immanence in the world, and in particular Bhaskar’s panentheistic conceptualisation of the immanence of God within the world’s categorical structure’ (Wright 2012, p.36; Archer, Collier, Porpora 2004). Meanwhile, in a brief review of theological critical realism, Wright introduces four representatives of the tradition: Ian Barbour, Arthur Peacocke, John Polkinghorne and Alistair McGrath.¹⁴⁵ He demonstrates that they too, in their interface studies between theology and the natural sciences, which share ‘a particular

¹⁴⁴ ‘The existence of a “religious” strain of critical realism predating “secular” critical realism was brought to the attention of the Bhaskar List by Tobin Nellhaus in June 2000 and raised by Doug Porpora at the IACR Conference in August.’ (Shipway 2000, p.29)

¹⁴⁵ Among them McGrath is the only one who has recently engaged with critical realism and integrated it into his theology.

interest in the congruence between scientific and theological epistemology', have shown that they are divided in their understanding of the Christian God between the panentheistic account (Barbour and Peacocke) and the classical Trinitarian account (Polkinghorne and McGrath) while all remain within a broadly critical realist spectrum (Wright 2012, pp.38ff).¹⁴⁶ Wright provides the essential contrasting ideas between the two views. First, in the panentheistic account one can find remarkable consistence with meta-Reality:

[Barbour] invoke[es] a panentheistic 'process theology' in which God is simultaneously ingrained within the natural order yet transcendent of it, and the being-in-becoming of the universe coincides with the being-in-becoming of God. ... Peacocke [by picking up Barbour's point] replaces the doctrine of incarnation with an account of Christ as the model human being, rejects the doctrine of original sin in favour of a notion of a failure of humanity to fulfil its potential, and supplements the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* with a notion of emanation that opens up an understanding of God and God-in-nature operating together as co-creators. (Wright 2012, p.41)

As for the key aspect of the classical Trinitarian account of God,

McGrath responds to Peacocke's revisionism by exploring the implications of retaining a classical Trinitarian theological model and seeking to understand it, and its relationship to natural science, within a critically realistic framework. He seeks to achieve this by approaching the natural world from the *a posteriori* retroductive claims of the classical Trinitarian doctrine of creation. According to this doctrine, the universe was created by, and is continuously sustained by, a creator God who created *ex nihilo* and allows creation the freedom to exist apart from himself, yet without ceasing to

¹⁴⁶ Wright reveals three points pertaining to both sides of theological critical realism, which are consistent with key aspects of critical realism. They are (1) interface study between science and theology 'as a response to two flawed approaches to the relationship between science and religion generated by the Enlightenment', (2) towards a critical realist epistemology, and (3) recognition of the significance of ontology (Wright 2012, pp.39ff). It is in the third point that the dividing point becomes apparent, according to Wright's review.

engage creatively with it. This immediately rules out panentheism: according to Trinitarian theology, God cannot be identified even partially with nature, so that nature is in no sense divine. (Wright 2012, p.42)

In spite of the contrasting views between the two sides, common to both is the requirement for inference to the best explanation, and the way taken by each side constitutes the methodological route of each theology, which in turn results in their division and contrasting accounts. Peacocke (1993, pp.15ff), for example, argues for the need to develop theology beyond hierarchical authentication¹⁴⁷ by applying criteria of reasonableness in that 'no authority would be automatic ... but would have to be authenticated inter-subjectively to the point of consensus by inference to the best explanation' (pp.17-18). He recognises that both religion and science engage with realities by employing metaphorical language and describing realities in 'models, which may eventually be combined into higher conceptual schemes'. This leads to the question of 'how the respective claimed cognitive contents of science and theology might, or should be, related' (p. 19). Hence he calls for a critical realist theology that deals with a hierarchy of truth drawn from the structured reality¹⁴⁸ by using not only criteria generally used in assessing ideas and in appraising 'scientific models and theories – namely, fit with the data, internal coherence, comprehensiveness, fruitfulness and general cogency', but also religious truth contained in communal interpretation and individual experiences in a reasonably combined way (pp.15-16). Hence he believes that authenticating of a religious tradition, like Christianity, can be validated when it is reasonably assessed not only from inside but also from outside the written sacred word or the sacred tradition, i.e. by facing sharp questions about the relationship between its claims and reality (Peacocke 1988, p.47). Hence, he insists upon continual openness to revision according to what is regarded as reasonable in the given time, in a way that neutralises tradition-specific authority. However this approach to theology seems

¹⁴⁷ By hierarchical authentication he means to claim for the authority of a type of theology by referring to a form of self-sufficient inner authority, such as 'the Church says' or 'the Bible says' (Peacocke 1933, p.17).

¹⁴⁸ Peacocke shows his understanding of reality in terms of entities, structures, processes and causality, which is consistent with critical realism (Peacocke 1988, p.51).

to share the characteristic feature of deistic or theistic Enlightenment natural theology, which, as McGrath points out, makes a strong appeal to nature for the demonstration of the existence and attitudes of God without necessary recourse to divine revelation (McGrath 2009, p.27).¹⁴⁹

McGrath takes a rather contrasting way in inferring to the best explanation for theology. Using what he calls an iterative procedure he claims Trinitarian theology as the best explanation of God (McGrath 2002, 2008, 2009) in that we can find a source for inference to the best explanation of otherness. It should be noted here that in McGrath's approach there is a methodological reverse or transition from that of theistic or deistic accounts of God to Trinitarianism. In understanding the relationship between natural and revealed theology many traditional accounts envisage that the 'triune God' is distinguished from the 'one God' as indicating the specifically Christian construal of God and a generalised notion of divinity, respectively, while conceiving their relation in terms of extension or amplification of the latter to the former; hence the triune God is a kind of additional insight to the notion of 'one God' (McGrath 2009, pp.62-63). This is similarly observed in the recent theological and philosophical debates about science and God in the form of essential deism inherited from Enlightenment thought. Those accounts have generated a perception that 'the doctrine of the Trinity tends to be treated as kind of addendum to the doctrine of God', which entails a typical model in classical natural theology in which

nature reveals a certain amount of information of God, which is then supplemented by revelation, which appends additional insights. Nature tells us that there is one God; revelation clarifies and enhances this discernment by adding that God is also threefold. (McGrath 2009, p.63)

¹⁴⁹ According to McGrath, there has been a pattern of transition of classical natural theology from deism, to theism and Trinitarianism. In a simple explanation, 'deism holds that God created the world; theism holds that God created the world and continues to direct it through divine providence; Trinitarianism holds that God created the world, continues to direct it through divine providence, and guides the interpreters of both the books of nature and Scripture through the illumination of the Holy Spirit'. McGrath provides points of difficulties with deism and theism from a Christian perspective. For details see McGrath 2009, pp.63ff.

However, in his historical survey of the notion of 'natural theology' McGrath finds that the concept of nature is indeterminate, an interpreted entity that is not autonomous. This leads him to reject the Enlightenment idea of nature as 'an objective entity, capable of acting as a universal ground of judgment', and to the conviction that the concept of nature is a geo-historical specificity. While rejecting Enlightenment natural theology, which appeals to nature to prove core elements of faith without recourse to divine revelation, McGrath explores 'the capacity of the Christian faith to make sense of what is observed' without failing to recognise theological significance of the empirical question of human perception, seeing or human engagement with the world of nature, such as 'thinking about, affective responding to and enactive interaction with the world'. He takes Trinitarian theology as a unification model, understood as an important meeting point between the Christian church and secular culture under the light of divine revelation through the Holy Spirit (pp.27-28).

The way that McGrath argues for the best explanation of the Trinitarian God is called 'iterative procedure', which can be characterised as a methodology in the quest for God in science and theology. Drawing on critical realist recognition of stratification of reality (personal, nature, history etc.),¹⁵⁰ he asks how a scientific theology can respond to such a stratified reality. He grasps the nature of the 'response' as interactive between reality and theology in an iterative process in which each addresses and is addressed by the other in successive and incremental revisions of the way we 'see' things in the light of 'insights disclosed through engagement itself' (p.32). Hence he states that,

Theology does not just address history, nor does it just address nature – it addresses *and is addressed* by these and other strata of reality, and has the responsibility of coordinating these different levels of being, and showing how they are coherent with its overall vision of reality. (McGrath 2002, p.239)

¹⁵⁰ Critical realism as referred to by McGrath (2002) is the early stage critical realism, see pp.209ff.

McGrath calls this 'iterative procedure' a scientific method, which has its starting point of 'seeing' nature from 'a definite social location, which shapes what we see and what we regard as significant' since 'there is no view from nowhere' (McGrath 2009, p.31); our seeing or 'reading' of reality is always 'tradition-mediated and tradition-constituted' (McGrath 2002, p.238). But the way of seeing or perception may be changed over the course of inquiry through discovery of new aspects of things, or by the emerging of new levels of interpretation of things while the things in question remain unchanged. Those new discoveries lead to the recalibration of theological observation, which is an integral aspect of natural theology. It does not fall into epistemic fallacy, but asserts the priority of ontology over epistemology since 'something may be "seen" in such a way that its true identity is concealed' (2009, pp.31-32). Hence we can see a degree of consistency of this approach with certain key aspects of critical realism, such as the holy trinity of critical realism and the principle of the intransitive/transitive dimension of knowledge. However, there is a crucial difference here. While Bhaskarian critical realism focuses on '*the stratification of the reality which generates theories*' (McGrath 2002, pp.237-238 emphasis original), hence relies on a strong appeal to nature in the form of causal explanation, even for the explanation of the transcendent as we have seen in his meta-Reality, the iterative procedure 'does not entertain the idea that the observation of nature can *prove* the existence of God through necessary inference' (McGrath 2009, p.56 emphasis original); instead it takes a unification form of explanation for its natural theology in that 'a bigger picture' takes the integral role for knowing and understanding its individual elements, including the nature of human engagement with them. The big picture can be a kind of metanarrative, such as the Christian Trinitarian narrative, which McGrath takes as his standpoint (2009, pp.53ff):¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ With regard to the classic difficulty of 'the great ontological trade-off' between 'a rich, abundant ontology with great explanatory power', which is the causal form of explanation underlying much classic natural theology, McGrath argues for a unificationist approach in which 'understanding' of a phenomenon means 'to see how it fits together with other phenomena in a unified whole'. This strongly resonates with 'the traditional Christian idea that to understand the world is to see the fundamental reality which underlies its multiple and sometimes apparently disconnected phenomena' (McGrath 2009, p.54).

By a 'Trinitarian natural theology', I mean the way of understanding both the natural world and the human engagement with that world which results from the Trinitarian vision of reality that is articulated by Christian orthodoxy. This way of looking at things is a consequence of the Christian revelation, and is not entailed by nature itself. (McGrath 2009, p.36)

McGrath provides three reasons for taking the Trinitarian vision of reality (pp.37ff): (1) with regard to 'the transformation of all things', it is better to explain it in terms of 'salvation', rather than 'explanation',¹⁵² (2) a Trinitarian worldview has the better 'empirical fit' with 'what may be observed of the natural world, human reason and experience, and culture in general' than any of its alternatives or rivals (p.57),¹⁵³ and (3) it enables us to develop a unificationist approach, articulated in the iterative procedure, through an abduction rather than deduction (like causal explanation), which seems more appropriate for natural theology by reinforcing 'the plausibility of the bigger picture' as the fundamental source of explanatory power of natural theology that explains the totality of human experience of reality.

The latter point, about abduction considered as a way of inference to the best explanation, provides a way of explanation of otherness within a bigger picture. Previously it was shown that the genuine sense of otherness is gradually attenuated in Bhaskar's critical realism up to the point of his dialectical turn, and is then fundamentally replaced or absorbed within the process of self-realisation in meta-Reality. Due to its fundamental premise of ontology, his critical realism was shown to be unable to integrate the surprising, non-agential moment of revelation of otherness with its genuine significance. This is particularly so where ethics is concerned, in that Bhaskar conceives of ethics as naturally arising from the pursuit of freedom of self, and as then extended for the other. This

¹⁵² This is congruent with the point raised earlier with regard to the lacuna of otherness in the Bhaskarian agential-centred explanation, where it is pointed out that concepts like heteronomous emancipation or salvation cannot be fitted into this form of explanation.

¹⁵³ By 'empirical fit' McGrath means the ability of the Trinitarian world view 'to match a wide range of phenomena, by its overall success in meeting a variety of needs' (McGrath 2009, p.57).

account was shown to be unable to capture the overflowing nature of encounter with infinity, like the engagement with the face of the other; filling the self with what cannot be drawn from within the self and overflowing with more than the self can contain, so that it becomes desire, inspired from otherness and inspiring the self-dialectical process. Now this surprising phenomenon can be explained by the Trinitarian account of God through McGrath's way of abduction. According to a model of abduction provided by Norwood Hanson, the logic of scientific discovery contains three common features:

1. The observation of some 'surprising' or 'astonishing phenomena', which represent anomalies within existing ways of thinking. This 'astonishment' may arise because the observations are in conflict with existing theoretical accounts.
2. The realisation that these phenomena would not seem to be astonishing if a certain hypothesis (or set of hypotheses) *H* pertained. These observations would be expected on the basis of *H*, which would act as an explanation for them.
3. There is therefore good reason for proposing that *H* be considered to be correct.

(McGrath 2009, p.46; Hanson 1961, p.104)

According to this model of abductive reasoning, the astonishing, non-agential event of otherness (*B*) is in conflict with the agential-centred explanation of Bhaskarian critical realism, but it would not be astonishing if it is expected in and explained by the Trinitarian account of God (*A*). Therefore we have a good reason to propose the Trinitarian account of God as correct and as a better explanation of otherness, and in the same way, otherness justifies the Trinitarian God. This fits with the simpler expression of the abductive reasoning that McGrath uses for Trinitarian natural theology: '*A* explains *B* while *B* justifies *A*' (McGrath 2009, p.56).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ McGrath provides the following simple explanation of the form of abduction used for his Trinitarian approach:

If *N* designates the type of natural theology presented and defended in this work, *O* designates the observation of the world, and *T* designates Trinitarianism, then we could suggest the following relationship between them which emphasizes a distinct role for natural theology:

Therefore, we now have a way paved by McGrath to the Trinitarian account of God as a better explanation of the dimension of otherness than Bhaskarian meta-Reality. In the next subsection we will explore how otherness can be seen, fitted into and explained by the bigger, though limited, picture of the Trinitarian account of God gained through Gunton, Torrance and Zizioulas, particularly in terms of their key notions of the Being of God in Act (the triune Becoming), the *homoousion* and personhood as hypostasis of the triune God, respectively.

2.2. The triune God and otherness

It is not the aim of this section to provide a general overview of Trinitarian theology; indeed, such a task would be impossible in the limited space available. Rather, it is intended here to get an explanation of ontology of otherness, something Bhaskar's ontology was unable to give, under the light of the Trinitarian account of God. Hence, we do not seek to answer the question of whether the Trinitarian account of God can register the dimension of otherness in its framework; rather, we aim to 'see', as McGrath insists, otherness from the tradition of the Christian Trinitarian account of God.

Previous chapters have drawn out certain features of otherness, such as 'non-agential moment', 'happening', 'event', 'revelation', 'transcendence', 'coming to being', and 'the first teaching'. In the following exploration we find that many of these feature as key aspects of the God of Trinity. Perhaps it was neither accidental nor coincidental that we figured out those features of otherness, if otherness is ontologically real and is grounded on the ontology of the triune God. Arguing in such a way is a typical form of explanation of the Trinitarian God, that is, to explain the stratified reality of the world including the dimension of otherness from the triune God of

T explains N; N explains O,
 O justifies N; N justifies T.
 This could, however, be simplified to:
 T explains O;
 O justifies T. (McGrath 2009, p.58)

Christianity, expressed here as 'the Being of God in Act, Who is Person'¹⁵⁵. In searching for the ontology of otherness, particularly with regard to God or the transcendent, our exploration of the Trinitarian God in the section will follow the line of study of the Being of God in Act, Who is Person, conducted by Colin Gunton (1941-2003), T.F Torrance (1913-2007) and John Zizioulas. Gunton, in his book *Becoming and Being* (1978), explored how Karl Barth (1886-1996) conceived the Trinitarian God in terms of the Being of God in Act; Torrance, a most significant interpreter of Barth, took the doctrine of the *homoousion* (the Being of God) as the cornerstone of his theological realism (1969, 1971, 1980, 1991, 1996); and Zizioulas gives due weight to personhood as the hypostasis (the mode of existence) of Trinity, from which he draws his exploration of ontology of otherness (1985, 2006).

Gunton – The triune God as 'Becoming'

Gunton begins his exploration of Barth's understanding of God from the point that God is one 'Becoming' in revelation (Gunton 1978, pp.117ff).¹⁵⁶ For Barth theology is *a posteriori* because it starts its work from believing what is *a priori* given in revelation. This manner of theology, which he developed from his study of Anselm, enables Barth to constitute the rationality of theology, in that the object of theology is the revelation as *a priori* given before our explanation or discovery, which in turn provides the rationality 'because God has given himself in his revelation in such a way that we can speak rationally of him on the basis of this very revelation' (p.126).¹⁵⁷ Hence to speak of God is dependent on who God is, and the being of God is known by his revelation that is his coming to us, which is expressed as 'Becoming'. Without this coming of God to us in revelation, according to Barth's account, it is impossible to pursue rationally the truth of God: 'Christian faith is not irrational,

¹⁵⁵ The expression for the triune God, 'The Being of God in Act, Who is Person', is drawn from the works of Gunton, Torrance and Zizioulas.

¹⁵⁶ In the book, Barth's Trinitarian God is explored through critiquing the neoclassical theism represented by Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000).

¹⁵⁷ This sense of rationality is different from a kind of rational theology in that we establish, 'by the use of reason, the existence and sometimes also the character and attributes of the object of theology' (Gunton 1978, p.126), which is often seen in both deist and theist approaches to theology.

not anti-rational, not supra-rational, but rational in the proper sense' (p.127). This aspect of revelation as givenness shows its deep contrast to the Bhaskarian sense of 'awakening' of alethic truth conceived as ingredient within the self. There is a fundamental difference of ontological assumption between God as immanent and God as otherness, in that the former understands God (or meta-Reality) as both immanent and transcendent but ultimately co-present at the level of ground-state, so that it can speak of concretely differentiated singulars, while these remain ultimately the same in the ground-state (or of singularity as emerged over the course of geo-historical process from the ultimate source, whatever it is),¹⁵⁸ but it cannot speak of otherness in a genuinely ontological sense. In contrast to this, in the latter explanation God is the other to us so that he 'can' come to us, rather than be discovered within us, in his 'Becoming'.

Gunton points out three meanings of the triune Becoming in revelation from his study of Barth. The first is 'God who *happens*' (p.128 emphasis added). For Barth revelation refers to 'something that happens; not to subjective experience but to events that *are* God', hence 'it is impossible to distinguish between God's word and himself between what God *does* and what he *is*' (p.129). We have already conceived 'happening' as a non-agential moment, caused by 'coming' of the other and indicating the existence of the other beside the self; now we have a very good reason to see otherness as a feature seen in the act of God; an explanation of otherness as not attributed to our agential being but conceived as the very non-agential moment given by Becoming of God. The second meaning, as 'God who happens', is God's Action in Jesus Christ as the historical event (pp.130ff); Jesus is the becoming, God incarnate as a particular historical event. This leads to the third meaning (pp.132ff) that God's happening cannot be depicted as happening within the cosmic process in that God's relation with universe is reduced to purely general terms. But Barth understands God's action in revelation as a concrete particularity, distinct from general history,

¹⁵⁸ This explanation is in accordance with the principle of synchronic emergent powers materialism, which Bhaskar first introduced in his explanation of social being (Bhaskar 1998) then later in meta-reality (2002a, 2002b). By applying the principle both to human being and to meta-Reality it is already assumed that there is 'internal connectivity' between them, in which there is no place for genuine sense of otherness. This point will appear again in dealing with Zizioulas's account of the triune God.

hence preventing 'the conception of revelation from degenerating into triviality, metaphysical generality or myth' (p.136).

The last point of revelation leads us to an important argument on the predication of the triune God: personhood. Barth's stress on the historical, concrete particularity, and refusal of reduction to generality indicates his rejection of the idea that God's freedom cannot be preserved and that God's action is necessitated by a general system. This idea leads to a further point, that the first principle will of 'necessity' pertain to the general system. But Barth fiercely rejects such an idea in his understanding of God because the doctrine of Being of God in Act does preserve God's freedom in his action.

In Barth the crucial proviso is made that God remains free to relate himself or not to do so ... He remains Lord ... God ... who really does things with, to, and for mankind, but who does them not because of necessitated metaphysical ties but because he freely and graciously chooses to do them. (Gunton 1978, p.154)

Since 'it is not enough simply to conceive God's being as being in general' (p.163, ; Jüngel 1967, p.9) Barth contrasts two doctrines of relation: the doctrine of necessary relatedness, where necessity overtakes free choice of person, and the Trinitarian doctrine of relation, where freedom of person to choose is preserved (Gunton pp.159ff).¹⁵⁹ The crucial difference between them is whether God is understood as Platonic substance or as person. The former renders the priority of necessity over freedom of person so that there is no possibility of being otherwise than by necessity, hence it rejects both being other and letting other to be; the latter, in contrast, conceives personality as acting free from necessity. While the former emphasises the communality of God with nature, hence leading to a typical form of pantheism of which the essential weakness is to 'restrict the freedom of God to be immanent where he will' (p.198), the latter rejects the 'communality of nature'

¹⁵⁹ In his reading of this, Jüngel stresses the point by conceiving the triune God 'as the origin of relationship in that it *puts itself in relation*' (Gunton 1978, p.163; Jüngel 1967, p.9).

as an error of natural theology (p.153). Therefore personhood is a key point that makes the Trinitarian God such as it is; hence the predication of God the Trinity because personhood is what makes possible the relation with otherness, a point that will be more clearly shown later in the work of Zizioulas.

Now, Gunton stresses that Barth's theological assertions are all centred on 'God is', and the assertion of 'God is person' leads Barth to a dynamic understanding of the being of God, which is termed 'the Being of God in Act' (p.189).

[W]ith regard to the being of God, the word 'event' or 'act' is *final* ... To its deepest depths God's Godhead consists in the fact that it is an event – not any event, not events in general, but the event of His action, in which we have a share in God's revelation. (Gunton 1978, p.189 cited from Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/1, p.263)¹⁶⁰

Here, to say that God is a particular event is to concentrate on 'the particular actuality of this particular triune subject'; God's act is an eminently personal act because 'God is not merely personal but the supreme instance of personality' (pp.189-190). At this point Barth articulates his realism of language: because language is a *posteriori* it must follow what actually happens. 'Since what happens is personal event, personal categories are required if we are to describe it correctly' (p.192). On this basis, Christian dogmatics can be seen as a *posteriori* description, 'referring' to the Being of God in Act as 'happening' in Jesus Christ who is the particular actual event in history. Hence the dogmatics as a *posteriori* language has its ontological basis in the Being of God in Act. This view contrasts with the post-structuralist view of language and discourse. For example, according to Derrida's account, meaning, the signified, is conceived as 'a passing product of words or signifiers, always shifting and unstable, part-present and part-absent'; and reality is conceived as 'constructed by our discourse rather than reflected by it'. What is implied is that we never know reality itself, 'rather than merely knowing our own discourse', so that there is no determinant truth or meaning

¹⁶⁰ "II/I" indicates volume/part of the book.

possible at all. Hence, as Sarup points out, according to this dogma we are imprisoned in our endless language-chain of the signifier-the signified without possibility of referring to reality: 'we are prisoners of our discourse' (Sarup 1993, p.97). However, in Barth's account, what is 'given' in Christian credos is referred to the Being of God in Act as actual and concrete particularity, and cannot be reduced to the impersonalised notion of the signifier or the signified, nor can it be erased in the endless chain of language; rather it is conceived as always providing a genuine referent point so that it provides possibility to 'renew' (or transform) the chain from that point. This idea is congruent with both Bhaskar's conception of transformative action by agent in his social theory of transformative model of social activity (TMSA), and Levinas's conception of 'the first teaching' that gives rise to the rationality of ethics, as seen in Chapters Two and Three respectively.

T.F. Torrance – The homoousion

This realist conception of language as *a posteriori* description in the form of dogmatics is highly congruent with Torrance's realist theory of theological knowledge, or simply theological realism (Torrance 1969, 1971, 1980, 1991, 1996). Torrance develops much of his distinctive theological reflection on the ground of the doctrine of the *homoousion*: 'the doctrine that Jesus Christ as the Word and Son of God belongs to the divine side of reality, and is himself very God come into our world to redeem and recreate us' (McGrath 1999, pp.151-2). It was in the later stages of his career that he developed a longstanding interest in the theological interaction with natural science in the form of theological realism, 'which he found especially expressed in the doctrine of the *homoousion*' (McGrath 2002, pp.264ff). Influenced by Barth's Christological focus in the understanding of God, Torrance keeps this idea central, but develops it in a different way by emphasising 'the physical nature of the incarnation' that establishes 'a rigorous theological connection between incarnation and creation, allowing cross-connections to be posited between the sciences which recognize Christ as their proper object, and those which address the creation itself as

their object' (p.265).¹⁶¹ But the doctrine of the *homoousion* keeps its centrality in the interactions with the sciences because Torrance asserts the need for Christian theology to 'return to the ground and grammar' 'in the light of the questions and issues thrown up by the scientific revolution'; the return to 'the foundations of knowledge carried ... on the ground of the revealed inherence of Word of Act in the Being of God', which 'demands an engagement with the classical doctrine of the incarnation'. This is because we have 'cognitive access into the being of God, into his inner divine intelligibility or *Logos*' only 'in and through Christ'. Hence the notion of the *homoousion* becomes important for his scientific theology because the doctrine that God is *homoousios* with Christ asserts that '[i]n our relations with Jesus Christ, we have to do directly with the ultimate reality of God. ... the *homoousion* is the ontological and epistemological linchpin of Christian theology' (McGrath pp. 266-267; Torrance 1980, pp.160-161). This methodology of 'seen as' is a fundamental *creedal* insight of the Christian churches since '[t]he Christian tradition has been shaped by this incarnational insight, which affects the manner in which both nature and Jesus Christ are perceived and comprehended' (McGrath p.268). This can be seen both as a form of the iterative procedure that McGrath expounded, and as being congruent with critical realism¹⁶² in that epistemological insights are determined by the ontological ground of the *homoousion*.

Torrance, on this ontological ground, demonstrates three distinct levels of knowledge, according to the stratification of theological explanation that can be developed from an engagement

¹⁶¹ Therefore it is said that,

... all intellectual disciplines or sciences are under an intrinsic obligation to give an account of reality according to its distinct nature ... theology and every scientific inquiry operate with the correlation of the intelligible and the intelligent ... it follows that the 'scientific' nature of an undertaking does not depend primarily upon the method to be employed, but upon the identification of the object to be studied ... to be seen as a posteriori activities, which are a response to 'the given'. (McGrath 1999, p.209)

¹⁶² McGrath understands Torrance's theological realism as congruent with critical realism by referring to the conception of critical realism of N.T. Wright. Wright's CR, which seems to share essential aspects with that of Bhaskar, is

a way of describing the process of 'knowing' that acknowledges the *reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower* (hence 'realism'), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* (hence 'critical'). ... Knowledge, in other words, although in principle concerning realities independent of the knower, is never itself independent of the knower. (McGrath 1999, pp.217-218; T.F Wright 1992, p.35)

with reality as a theological response toward a higher understanding of the Trinity (McGrath 1999, pp.168ff). The constitution of three levels indicates a developmental or deepening meaning of the world in that it has its starting point in the initial perception of orderedness and structure for more discerning investigation. Hence its methodology takes a form of 'advancement to deeper levels of understanding, in which each level rests upon what has already been uncovered, yet casts additional light upon it' (pp.168-169): Experience of God → Economy of Trinity → Essential Trinity (McGrath 2002, p.237). The first level of incipient theology is the basic level of Christian experience and living, called 'the *evangelical* and *doxological* level', which is 'the level of our day-to-day worship and meeting with God in response to the proclamation of the Gospel' in that 'God is apprehended intuitively, 'without engaging in analytical or logical process of thought' (McGrath 1999, p.170; Torrance 1996, pp.88-90).¹⁶³ The second stage is the theological level that moves from 'the experiential apprehension' of God into 'discerning the structures' which underlie the experience (McGrath p.171). It was this kind of movement, according to Torrance, 'that was involved in the deliberations of the Council of Nicaea', in that 'the Nicene fathers developed the all-important concept of the *homoousion* not through abstract theological speculation, but through an attempt to give expression to the reality which they had grasped intuitively at the level of evangelical and doxological experience' (Myers 2008, p.8). Since the theological inquiry at this level is focused on 'an analysis of the self-revelation of God in history', that is, his economic Trinitarian relation in history, the concept of the *homoousion* is decisively important as it is recognised as 'the central organizing truth' of the theological engagement (McGrath 1999, p.172). It should be noted that this movement is not away from the concrete experience but a moving 'deeper into that level by uncovering the patterns and structures which gave rise to our experience in the first place'. Hence it is 'the penetration into the structures of the divine reality' (Myers 2008, p.9). The movement continues at the third level, or higher theological level, where we reach the 'purest and most refined form' of theology and concepts are formulated as to 'constitute the 'basic grammar' of all theological

¹⁶³ Torrance uses the term 'intuitively' 'to refer to the means by which believers directly apprehend the reality of God, so that it should not be read as equation with revelation' (McGrath 1999, p.170, see note 73).

thought', since it is the place where 'we have to do with 'the ultimate relation intrinsic to God's own Being' which as such must 'govern and control all true knowledge of [God] from beginning to end' (p.9; Torrance 1980, pp.158-159). This movement, according to Torrance, corresponds to the patristic movement from the economic Trinity (*oikonomia*) to the essential Trinity (*theologia*), in which 'the organizing truth, complementing *homoousion*, is *perichoresis*, the mutual or coinherent indwelling of the three divine persons in the eternal communion of their one Being' (McGrath 1999, p.172), which is richly explored by Zizioulas in terms of 'personhood' and 'communion' in relation with 'ontology of otherness', to which we will turn next. But before doing so, one last point is worthy of attention, since it can be a good bridge to Zizioulas.

With regard to the third level, there might be a danger of mistaking the upgrading movement for an esoteric experience of transcendence, in that the ultimate goal is the exoteric knowledge itself, and being confined in speculative enjoyment of that knowledge. At this point the highest truth is reduced to esoteric knowledge and becomes desire. What is left then is desire for a desire, in which God, the Other *par excellence*, is evaporated (Zizioulas 2006, p.50).¹⁶⁴ Torrance himself gave a similar warning not to run 'the risk of becoming detached from its mooring in God's self-revelation in history, and becoming little more than speculation and possible invention' (McGrath 1999, p.173).¹⁶⁵ This is a fatal mistake, like the one that is observed in the very first sin committed by the first persons in their desire for knowledge instead of personal relation with God; by reducing God to desire what remains is the non-personal fruit of knowledge. What this indicates is the evaporation of personal relation, which is against the true goal of the Christian vision of life of faith, viz. being in personal relation as a person; communion with the triune God as the three persons of the Trinity are with each other; loving and being loved.

¹⁶⁴ This is a fundamental critique of Levinas from Zizioulas.

¹⁶⁵ So he says:

We must keep a constant check on these refined theological concepts and relations to make sure that they are in definite touch with the ground level of God's actual self-revelation ... and that they remain empirically correlated with the saving truths and events of the Gospel, otherwise they tend to pass over into mythological projections of our own rationalizations into Deity. (McGrath 1999, p.173 cited from Torrance 1996, p.109)

John Zizioulas – Personhood and otherness

From McGrath's iterative procedure we have found the rationality of explaining otherness from a particular tradition, such as the traditional theology of the Trinity; in Gunton's study of Barth we have noted that the features of otherness drawn out in previous chapters are features of the triune God as 'Becoming'; and from Torrance we have found a realist epistemology, centred on the *homoousion*, in which three developmental levels of theological inquiry are distinguished, reflecting different types of knowledge of God of which the highest is about essential Trinity. Now in Zizioulas's study of the triune God we find a rich theological account of the essential Trinity in terms of personhood, in that 'otherness' is explored as constitutive of the Being of God. While the term Trinitarian God was used quite generally in our introduction to McGrath's iterative procedure, and in Gunton and Torrance it was more focused on God the Son incarnate, as seen in the expression of the triune God as Becoming and the emphasis on the doctrine of the *homoousion*, it is in Zizioulas's works that a particular attention is given to God the Father in understanding the triune God. At the heart of this exploration is the concept of personhood as hypostasis of the triune God, which is in turn conceived as the very ontological ground of otherness.

The crucial question has to be ... whether [otherness] is a *sine qua non* condition for one's very being and for the being of all that exist. (Zizioulas 2006, p.14)

From Bhaskarian ontology we have seen his particular account of God (or the ultimate reality), called meta-Reality, for which the fundamental way of argument is grounded on transcendental realism, which in turn argues for ontology of being in terms of its implicit, inner tendencies (which are ground-state qualities for meta-Reality). Hence it has been argued here that this form of ontology is characterised as being-centredness in the sense that being is fundamentally explained by what is *within*, that is, its normically qualified properties, working as causal agent of

that being so that this ontology is termed a form of agential-centred explanation. Now, this type of ontology is markedly congruent with the substantialist approach to the understanding of the being of God, which contrasts with Zizioulas's personhood approach. Thus at the heart of his development of the personhood approach, one can see an argument between the substantialist and the personhood accounts on the being of God, in that the central notions are *ousia* and *hypostasis*, respectively.

According to Zizioulas, to understand the 'being' of God as 'substance' and to give it priority over the person is deeply related with the basic Greek idea (Zizioulas 2006, p.220). The main characteristic of the thought is its concern for *ousia*, that is, a concern about 'being', hence it developed a kind of ontology within which 'Greek thought in all its variations (Platonic, Aristotelian, etc.) always operated' (p.208). Drawing on Mascall, Zizioulas calls this ontology a closed ontology in that

... every being had a nicely rounded-off nature which contained implicitly everything that the being could ever become ... What Greek thought could not have tolerated ... would have been the idea that a being could become more perfect in its kind by acquiring some characteristic which was not implicit in its nature before.
(Zizioulas 2006, p. 208, see note 3; cited from Mascall 1971, p.256f)¹⁶⁶

Thus being understood in such ontology is 'being *qua* being', without allowing any external thing or being as causative for its being. With regard to the idea of causation, Greek philosophy radically posited causation only within the framework of being; everything in the world is caused by something else but 'the world as a whole is not caused *radically* ... The world is eternal; it is not ontologically caused.' This kind of ontology is a 'self-existent' explanation of being in that 'being is not a gift but a datum to be reckoned with by the particular beings' within it. All particular things, in

¹⁶⁶ It has already been observed that to understand being as containing 'implicitly everything that the being could ever become' is central to Bhaskar's ontology, implied in his transcendental realism and the principle of SEPM and explicitly acknowledged in his meta-Reality in terms of the ground-state qualities or cosmic envelope.

this ontology, are conceived as caused *necessarily* by what is implicit so that the idea of necessity is inscribed into the ontology (Zizioulas 2006, p.104).¹⁶⁷ Everything in this ontology is understood in terms of the boundaries of being in terms of its qualities, properties, and particulars. Hence the logical necessity and ontological structure are constituted such that *ousia*, that is, 'being *is*' comes first, then 'modes' of being in particulars; the priority is given to being itself rather than to its particular modes. This being itself is conceived as the principle of being or the cosmological necessity, which is termed *substance* of being (Zizioulas 1985, pp.39ff). When applied to understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, that is, 'one substance, three persons', there has been a traditional interpretation of the doctrine, particularly in western theology, whereby

God first *is* God (His substance or nature, His being), and then exists as Trinity, that is, as persons ... 'On the One God' followed by 'On the Trinity' ... [on] the assumption that the ontological 'principle' of God is not found in the person but in the substance, that is, in the 'being' itself of God. (Zizioulas 1985, p.40 emphasis original)

However, according to Zizioulas, this represents a misinterpretation of the Greek Fathers' theology of the Trinity because for them 'the unity of God, the one God and the ontological "principle" ... the being of God does not consist in the one substance of God but in the *hypostasis*, that is, *the person of the Father*' (p.40). A serious form of misunderstanding of the Trinity had already been raised earlier in the teaching of Arius (AD. 250-336); Arianism had been condemned as a heresy in the first ecumenical council of Nicaea. The Arians took the position that it was implied that 'the generation of the Son was not free but *necessary*' (Zizioulas 2006, p.108, see note 18, emphasis added).¹⁶⁸ This necessitarian understanding of the Trinity made the Son subordinate to God the Father; hence it implied both the reduction of God the Father into the system of necessity

¹⁶⁷ To understand being as to be reckoned is also congruent with Bhaskar's idea of 'awakening' or 'Platonic anamnesis' by agent, who is conceived as 'thinking (conscious) being' fundamentally. See, Bhaskar 2002b, pp.357ff.

¹⁶⁸ Arius was a Libyan presbyter in Alexandria when he declared that 'there was when he was not', which implied that the Son is divine but a created being, not co-essential with the Father. This raised soteriological challenges to the early stage of the doctrine of the Trinity since it made the Son Jesus less than the Father.

and a rejection of the true meaning of being person for both God the Father and the Son. It was the Cappadocian Fathers in the fourth century who dealt with this problem successfully by asking whether God's being is constituted necessarily or freely. In particular, Gregory of Nazianzus, based on the works of predecessors who had distinguished between will and substance, distinguished between 'will' and 'the willing one' in that the 'will' of God presupposes his freedom while the willing one denotes a willing *person*. Zizioulas finds two crucial points implied in the distinction:

On the one hand, it is implied that the question of freedom is a matter of *personhood*; God's being ultimately depends on a willing *person* – the Father; on the other hand, it indicates ... that '*even the Father's own being* is a result of the 'willing one' – the Father himself. Thus by making a person –the Father – the ultimate point of ontological reference ... the Cappadocian Fathers made it possible to introduce freedom into the notion of being, perhaps for the first time in the history of philosophy.

(Zizioulas 2006, p.108, note 18 emphasis original)

Here we find the shift of identification of the being of God from divine substance or '*ousia*' to the personhood, that is, the *hypostasis of the Father*, through conceiving personhood as freedom from necessity.¹⁶⁹ But at the same time this point reminds us of the contrast between this position and the Bhaskarian account of meta-Reality, working in the framework of what he calls modalities and mechanisms, which are non-personal by nature, and subject to its own inner ontological structure, within which a particular has no possibility to claim for genuine causative power, but is always posited in internal relationality of the whole, hence cannot claim for ontological primacy. However, Zizioulas argues that asserting the personhood as the hypostasis of the being of God is consistent with Biblical thought in that being is understood as 'caused in a radical way by *someone* – a particular being', leading to an ontology of personhood in which a particular person – the Father –

¹⁶⁹ It should be mentioned that the concept of hypostasis has been used by both the substantialist and the personhood approach. However, by tracing back to the Cappadocian Fathers, who made the original shift, Zizioulas makes the point that for those Fathers 'the ontological identity of God and the unity of his being were not to be found in divine 'substance' but in the *hypostasis of the Father*' (Zizioulas 2006, p.215, see note 16).

is given the ontological primacy (p.104).¹⁷⁰ He is ontologically unique and irreplaceable by any others because the whole being is dependent on him (p.108). How then does Zizioulas expound this?

Zizioulas expounds the personhood of God the Father in terms of a combination between *ekstasis* and *hypostasis*, arguing that personhood denotes the *arche* of the Being of God, that is, the mode of existence as a movement, rather than 'being' in the sense of *ousia* (pp.212ff). As has been argued, being a person means being free from necessity, which implies 'openness of being', but more than that, it implies the *ekstasis* of being, a movement towards communion with others in that the person transcends the boundaries of the 'self' to freedom to love in the communion. At the same time 'the person in its ecstatic character reveals its being in a *catholic* ... integral and undivided way and ... in its being ecstatic it becomes hypostatic', bearing its nature in its totality (p.213).

Ekstasis and *hypostasis* represent two basic aspects of personhood ... Thus the idea of person affirms at once both that personal being cannot be 'contained' or 'divided', and that the mode of its existence, its *hypostasis*, is absolutely unique and unrepeatable. Without two conditions, being falls into an a-personal reality, defined and described like a mere 'substance', that is, it becomes an a-personal being. The combination of the notion of *ekstasis* with that of *hypostasis* in the idea of the person reveals that the personhood is directly related to ontology – it is not a quality added, as it were, to beings, something that beings 'have' or 'have not', but it is *constitutive* of what can be ultimately called a 'being'. (Zizioulas 2006, p.213 emphasis original)

Now, from this conception of personhood we can follow how Zizioulas grounds otherness ontologically as a constitutive part of being. It is not about what is being, but is about how is being, and this question of how is being can only be answered from the notion of personhood. According to the ontological primacy of particular, it has been shown that God the Father is the particular person

¹⁷⁰ It is worth noting that the 'I am who I am' of the Bible (Ex. 3:14) is a remarkable illustration of the assertion of God as a particular and a person rather than a being. In fact, it is not the way of the Bible to attempt to describe this *someone* in terms of being (Zizioulas 2006, p.104).

who caused in his freedom the others to *be*. His personhood, that is, his mode of being, creates the others in his freedom. By letting the others be God the Father freely becomes the other of the world. 'Being "other" is part of what it means to be oneself' (p. 13), hence the freedom of being other of God makes possible not only creation but also other persons of the Trinity. Here we can speak of ontology of otherness and ontology of freedom in the personhood of God the Father; to make oneself be other genuinely implies to let the other be her/him self, not to be absorbed into my totality. It is where that otherness and freedom meet in the constitution of the being of God the Father and other persons of the Trinity. The relationship between the three persons is conceived in terms of *perichoresis*, by which the Cappadocians expressed the unity of the Trinity:

[E]ach person carries the full, undivided nature and co-inheres in the other persons, thus showing substance to be commonly shared among the persons not by way of each person holding *part* of it ... but by each *coinciding fully into one and the same nature, carried in its totality by each person*. (2006, pp.106-7, note 14 emphasis original)

Zizioulas calls the relationship between the persons of the Holy Trinity the 'hypostatical relation' in that the Father is the 'Willing One' as a person and his whole 'will' is shared by all three persons. Thus the ontological arche in the Trinity is in the Father who is the 'willing one' as the initiator of the divine freedom, and the Son is not born out of substance but is born 'willingly and freely' by the Father. Therefore the notion of personhood is crucial in Trinitarian theology (pp.120-121).

The hypostatical relation, the mode of existence of the being of God is also central to the understanding of the doctrine of *ex nihilo*, in which the world as the other of God is not conceived as extension of God's being, as in the case of *ousia* or emergence from the cosmic envelope as seen in Bhaskarian meta-Reality, where there is no genuine other; but only 'out of nothing' with His freely loving will is the world created as the other of God. The doctrine of *ex nihilo* asserts the uniqueness

of the Creator and the creation, while the act of freedom of the Father safeguards otherness between them so that they, including human beings, do not remain separate but come to communion in a *hypostatic* way: 'God and man remain other, and thus ontologically free, by virtue of the fact that they are united in a *hypostatic* way' (p. 37).

Among other creatures, the human being is privileged in an awesome way because he/she is created as the *imago Dei*, gifted with freedom so that 'the human being can properly be called, a *person*, as it is endowed with the freedom to reflect divine personhood in creation'. Hence the true meaning of human being or the alethic truth of human being should be found in his/her uniqueness as a *person*, not in certain qualities he/she ultimately shares with other beings. The person of human being can only be properly personal when it is hypostasised by the divine personhood who is the Christ Jesus incarnate, since 'it is *divine* personhood alone that can be the model of true personhood'.¹⁷¹ This Zizioulas calls hypostatisation of human being through the hypostasis of Christ,¹⁷² which renders the human person with a double sense of destination: on the one hand, 'to bring the rest of creation into communion with God so that the *hypostasis* of every creature might be saved from mortality and thus be shown to be a true *hypostasis*' (p.95); on the other hand, as Farrow points out, to participate in Christ's sonship, 'in his filial *schesis* [the eternal relation to the Father], in his being *for* the Father'. This is because 'to be personal *is* to be distinct ... for the sake of unity'. Thus in the unity with Christ we find ourselves, not ceasing to be ourselves but 'being for the Father' as Christ is for the Father (Farrow 2007, p.117). Thus, by combining those two senses of

¹⁷¹ It is worth noting the usage of the term 'hypostatisation' or 'hypostasised' as a verb type of hypostasis, which can be juxtaposed with the notion of being whose essence is understood as 'the process or event of being', implying its dynamic meaning as 'a verb to be' or 'to vibrate' (Levinas 1991, p.23; 187), in order to reveal an interesting point of contrast between them. Whereas the verb type of hypostasis indicates a movement towards the other, the latter notion indicates a movement of the self for the self, securing its essence, hence Levinas calls it totality. Thus what makes the two usages different is not what being is itself, but the presence or absence of otherness.

¹⁷² With regard to the question of how Christ fulfils the hypostatisation upon human being, there is a twofold answer. First, his personhood, which is constituted from his eternal relation (*schesis*) to Father, enables him to cause his human nature to be, and then second, he generates 'the free or catholic person by sharing with him or her the same *schesis* that is constitutive of his own person'. This requires 'the cross and the descent into hell [and] is effected in the Spirit, by sacramental means, through the baptismal and Eucharistic liturgies' (Farrow 2007, p.113).

destination, the ultimate goal that can be drawn from Zizioulas's theology would be 'fully becoming a person' (Collingwood 2007, p.13).¹⁷³

3. Concluding Remarks – A model of stratification of human being

Here we can see the difference in vision of universal emancipation between Zizioulas and Bhaskar. Though both accounts are expounded in terms of what is beyond the natural being, for Bhaskar the possibility of universal emancipation is attributed to the cosmic envelope that is shared by all beings, hence it is ultimately the self, in that the notions of freedom and love are fundamentally bound within the working framework of the self like awakening and co-presence; while for Zizioulas it is attributed first to the personhood and otherness of God, then to the hypostatical relations gifted to human beings by God in his freedom in love. Farrow expounds the hypostasisation in terms of 'freedom *in*, as well as freedom from necessity' because when Zizioulas speaks of freedom from necessity it does *not* mean the elimination of necessity, but 'freedom *in* necessity, through creaturely communion with God' with the possibility of overcoming certain necessities, which might be called deification (Farrow 2007, p.117; 120). Therefore, seen from the Trinitarian perspective, the Bhaskarian vision of emancipation is limited by its necessitarian framework, hence is unable to let others *be* genuinely and uniquely, and if the otherness is absent then there would be no genuine sense of ethical relation; moreover, it would be a mistake to understand emancipation solely by reference to self-realisation and self-awakening because in the Christian vision the dominance of self over otherness is congenial to our fallen existence as the result of the rejection of God, that is, to reject 'the Other as constitutive of his being' and to declare

¹⁷³ The concept of personhood 'should not be understood as an 'individual' in the sense of an identity conceivable in itself, an 'axis of consciousness' and a concurrence of natural and moral qualities, or a number that can be subject to addition or combination', because this was not what was meant by the Greek Fathers (Zizioulas 2006, p.171). Rather, to understand human being or its hypostasis as consciousness or mind was a substantialist approach, which is a western cultural inheritance from St. Augustine (Collingwood 2007, pp.140), and in recent history influenced modern existentialist philosophers; Zizioulas calls it 'anthropomorphic monstrosity' (Zizioulas 2006, p.173).

‘himself to be the ultimate explanation of his existence’, in other words, to give rise to the self as having ontological priority over the other (Zizioulas 2006, pp.43-46). Therefore what is a lacuna in Bhaskar’s critical realism, the lacuna of ontological otherness, seems the very point that constitutes the two ontological, but contrasting, accounts of meta-Reality and the Trinitarian God.

With regard to Levinas, we find that the concept of personhood challenges his concept of otherness and ethical subjectivity, not in the sense of negation of them but in the sense of fulfilling of them.¹⁷⁴ First, the immense emphasis on the ethical directionality of ‘from me to the other’ as expressed for example in terms of responsibility, substitution, or expiation for the other, needs to be put in the right order of relation according to the prior hypostatic relation given ‘from above’.¹⁷⁵ As we have seen, the Father is the ‘one personal arche in God’ who is causative of the other two persons and of creation (p.119), and Christ, like the Father, shares his personhood with us, hence generates the free person in his ‘becoming’ (incarnation, the Cross and the descent to hell) (Farrow 2007, p.113), that is the hypostatisation. This is to recognise the prior ontological directionality ‘from above to me’, which was recognised as ‘coming of the other’ in the reading of Levinas but also as the first openness to the other.¹⁷⁶ At this juncture what is crucially corrective for Levinas is that it is not simply ‘openness’ to the other but at the same time it is ‘freedom’ in and from necessity with the generation of personhood within us so that we may be able to make a hypostatic *personal* relation with others. Thus what we called ethical subjectivity in Levinasian philosophy can find its anthropological arche that is more than ethical, it is also personal since it has its divine arche in a never ceasing relationship with the true Other. This leads to the second point of correction of Levinas’s concept of otherness, particularly as concerns the eschatology of otherness (Zizioulas 2006,

¹⁷⁴ In spite of Zizioulas’s critique of Levinas with regard to certain points, he recognises Levinas and Buber as having made a departure from the consciousness-centred philosophy of western thought and culture (Zizioulas 2006, p.46).

¹⁷⁵ Zizioulas makes clear that the ontology of personhood for human being can only be provided by Christology, not by created being, because Christology as fulfilling the human being drives to personhood. From this point of Christology he sets out four conditions for the possibility of personhood of human being: it comes from ‘the above’; it is from ‘the hypostatic unity’ with God; it needs a new birth which requires the Cross; and the impossibility of fulfilment of the identity in history (Zizioulas 2006, pp.108-109).

¹⁷⁶ See Chapter 3, p.

pp.49ff): ‘for Levinas the ultimate destination of Desire is not the Other but the Desire of the Other’ which is sharply contrasted with the Greek Fathers ‘for whom the movement of Desire or *eros* finds its rest in the particular other’ (p.50). In Levinas’s thought, the Desire is always my Desire as a way of transcendence from totality, and is also ethical insofar as my Desire keeps a distance of the Other from totality in order for him not to be absorbed; but it is not communion as seen in hypostatic relation because the Other does not desire us or any other; hence, ‘what we are left with in the end is nothing but our own Desire’ (p.50). But God, the Other *par excellence*, ‘initiates or “causes” our Desire for him in and through his Desire for us’ so that there is ‘an event of *communion* of Desire at the very heart of otherness’ (p.51 emphasis original). God’s initiative movement towards us, his desire of us and provoking us to desire him, is expressed as love or *eros* in that we, particulars, are ‘beloved’ and ‘unique’ only as gifts of God, ‘who grants [us] an identity by establishing a unique relation with [us]’ (p.89). In this Trinitarian vision, Zizioulas understands faith in a Eucharistic way, in that everything, including our very being, is attributed to the giver:

Faith is thus an attitude of gratitude ... and of doxology to the Other *par excellence*, the author of all otherness. This kind of faith offers no security of rational conviction. The only proof of God’s existence is his love – demonstrated by our very being, in otherness and communion. *We are loved, therefore he exists.* (Zizioulas 2006, p.98 emphasis added)

This gives rise to recognition of an ontological dimension even prior to Levinasian ethical subjectivity. If Levinasian philosophy corrects Bhaskarian ethical agent by incorporating it within the dimension of otherness, so that it presents ethical subjectivity, it is the Trinitarian account of personhood that corrects the Levinasian ethical subject by originating it in the ontological primacy of ‘being loved’ over ethical subjectivity.¹⁷⁷ In other words, while in Levinasian thought the engagement

¹⁷⁷ Levinas does adumbrate a prior event of being welcomed by the other (which he calls a famine other) in his explanation of the dwelling of the separated I, because without such hospitality of the famine other there would be no difference in dwelling from the brutal outside; hence dwelling indicates a place where the

with the other is seen as a happening or event with which the I remains non-agential, so that it is described simply as 'coming of the other', in the hypostatic relation the Other *par excellence* comes for us, not accidentally or necessarily but freely in his love, hence can be described as 'overflowing with love' from his personhood upon us;¹⁷⁸ while the Levinasian encounter with the face of the other gives rise to apology and obligation for ethical exigency, which may constitute a language of critique in the form of negation, including of its own totality, the hypostatic relation gives rise to an attitude of gratitude, which may constitute a language of hope from the gratitude for the fundamental givenness of being itself in the faith of truthful personhood of God, which in turn becomes the very source of transformative negation.¹⁷⁹ If we have been informed by Bhaskar with a limited sense of love, simply speaking, as a binding force of the self,¹⁸⁰ hence constituting ethical dialectical agency, and if Levinas has taught us the inevitability of otherness and my ethical response to the other, hence constituting ethical subjectivity, it is the Trinitarian theology, particularly that of Zizioulas, that lets us know who we are, not in the sense of qualities we 'have' but more fundamentally in the sense of who we 'are'; that is, we are person, 'being loved then loving' after the model of the Trinity. Therefore we may suggest the following model of ontological stratification of human being:

(Bhaskarian) Dialectical agency, as incorporated into

(Levinasian) Ethical subjectivity, as originating from

(Zizioulas) Personhood generated by

separated I can develop its interiority in security (see, Levinas 2007, pp.109ff). But, this being welcomed cannot be conceived as a hypostatic personal relation because what is developed from the point is not person, but interiority on which all works of totality, even totality itself, are established, affirming its separatedness.

¹⁷⁸ One should not confuse the expression 'overflowing with love' with the Platonic image of God, expressed as an 'overflowing crater with love' because in the former it is from personhood, that is, freely in love, but the latter is a kind of necessary generation from 'being' of God in which the concept of personhood cannot be attributed (Zizioulas 2006, p.119 see note 25).

¹⁷⁹ In their communal study on educational curriculum and schooling, Arnowitz and Giroux claim 'a fundamental commitment to the notions of hope and emancipation' and a need to be 'informed by the language of possibility and hope' in the face of the one-sided position of the radical educators whose critique was so focused on power-interest introduction through schooling, which falls short of providing 'possibilities for critical teaching and student empowerment' (Arnowitz & Giroux 1986, pp.141ff).

¹⁸⁰ The Bhaskarian concept of love can be described as an aspect or result of awakening. Love for Bhaskar is a principle of unity, working at the 3L realm of totality, which is construed as 'the cohering, healing, uniting, de-alienating force ... Love is the ground-state quality which binds the universe together' (Bhaskar 2002b, pp.228-229).

(Trinitarian) The hypostatic relation with the persons of the Trinity

At the level of the dialectical agency there is a lack of recognition of, or an indifference to, the dimension of otherness, resulting to a single openness in that human being is conceived in terms of the agency of its innermost self with capability of dialectical openness for a greater totality. Remaining at this level, life can be true to the degree that it awakens what is true for the self through transcendental identification, including transformative negation. At the level of ethical subjectivity, the significance of otherness is recognised and lies at the heart of the constitution of ethical subjectivity; it reveals another dimension of openness, which seems more fundamental than the openness of the ethical-dialectical agency because the latter can only be *ethical* when it has the openness to the other. Life at this level may be true to the degree that it desires beyond itself and becomes responsible for the other according to the ethical truth, provoked by encountering the other then inscribed in consciousness. At the level of personhood, human being is not identified with either subjectivity or agency, which is a quality that we *have* but who we *are*. Human being is identified as a *person* and those qualities can only be achieved by or added to a person. Likewise openness is conceived not as a quality we have, but as a constitutive part of a person, because being a person means being in the hypostatic relation, in that a person is *being other* of someone else in the mode of beloved and loving, in which ethical relation is already implied. Thus it can be said of person as openness that the Levinasian double openness finds its ontological unification in personhood; a person as openness works through all stages of ethical and dialectical stages. Such personhood is not self-generated, but is a gift from the divine person by his hypostatic relation to us. Life in the level of personhood is, therefore, ontologically truthful since by becoming a person we are hypostatically realised truth or a new birth in truth, but still in need of becoming more fully person, not only by transformative dialectical negation but fundamentally in faithful relation with the persons of the Trinity.

Chapter 5 Ontology and Otherness in Religious Education

Introduction

Andrew Wright was perhaps the first to engage properly with critical realism and to identify it as one of the underlying principles in the formation of religious education (Wright 2000, 2000a, 2004, 2007).¹⁸¹ Previously, his work had focused on developing a critical approach to spiritual education (Wright 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000, 2000a), one that is 'designed to cast doubt upon the provenance of an experientially based religious pedagogy, open up other potential horizons of meaning, and empower students to take responsibility for their spiritual lives by cultivating appropriate level of religious literacy' (Wright 2004, p.viii). Hence it is possible to see his works in the frame of confrontation and response. By confrontation we mean that his in-depth critique of liberal religious education finds serious flaws related with the problem of dissociation of truth from truthfulness that is rooted in the tendency in religious education to reject truth claims. By response we mean that he proposes a type of religious education that re-habituates religious literacy among pupils in a critical manner by inviting them into the course of the pursuit of truth and truthfulness. This is where he takes a critical realist perspective, alongside other philosophical sources, in framing his critical realist approach to religious education. In the following sections, therefore, we will attend first to his critique of liberal religious education, then to his theory of critical religious education, which comprises the central conceptual framework of Truth

¹⁸¹ Even more recently, he has extended his interest to the incorporation of critical realism into the understanding of Christianity and *vice versa* (Wright 2012).

and Truthfulness, and finally to his stress on discrete religious traditions as the default position of religious education. Particularly in the second section, we will read Wright's approach in regard to *ontology and otherness* as argued in the previous chapters. In the final section, it will be shown that Wright's approach to religious education, although moderate in itself, paves a way for the ontology and otherness approach to religious education that provides the possibility of Christian religious education in Christian schools.

1. Critique of Liberal Religious Education

1.1. A vertical account

In the second half of the 1990s Wright sought to develop a critical approach to spiritual education.¹⁸² The results of over five years' work can be seen in his book, *Spirituality and Education*, where he provides an account of how the inclusive model of religious education has emerged in the United Kingdom (mainly in England and Wales) (Wright 2000, pp.63ff).¹⁸³ The consolidation of the Church-State partnership in the 1944 Education Act made it possible to offer a 'common-denominator Protestant Christianity, without denominational bias' (p.64), characterised as a confessional Christian education. Later the eclipse of Christianity in society brought about a gradual change in the characteristic of RE from the confessional to the neo-confessional, rejuvenating Christian education by bridging teenagers' own 'grammar' of their lives to Christian values (Loukes 1961, p.7). By the 1970s this had been replaced by 'a modern multi-faith religious education concerned with phenomenological description of religion' rather than with induction into Christian beliefs (Wright 2000, p.64). This was accompanied by the rise of the vision of liberal humanism in society and in education, particularly in moral education that stressed the cultivation of the twin

¹⁸² Since the term spiritual education has been used to denote the recent interest or direction of religious education, it is used here interchangeably with the general term religious education.

¹⁸³ His reading of the historical background of RE in this book provides a crucial reference for a reading of the Korean case, because of the resemblance between the two cases of RE development in certain aspects.

liberal virtues of freedom and tolerance 'as means to establish common cross-cultural understanding in a pluralist society' (pp.64-65). This led RE to replace the ultimate spiritual goal of the ultimate truth of Christianity with 'the establishment of a just, equitable and harmonious society', that is, a vision of an inclusive society in which religious education is considered as a tool for social harmony (p.65).

By this time there had been developed two models of RE, which contained 'the origins of the main agendas which have largely determined the evolution of the different pedagogies of RE over the last forty years' (Grimmitt 2000, p.26ff): 'explicit' religious education, 'concerned with the detailed phenomena of religion', as originally advocated by the *Schools Council Working Paper Number 36* in 1971, and 'implicit' religious education, 'concerned with the pupils' search for meaning', in which John Hull took a significant role¹⁸⁴ (Grimmitt p.28). In a context of increasing concern with the plurality of religious and secular worldviews, these models advocated a neutral presentation of religion, by focusing either on objective or common features of religions, or on the experiential dimension of pupils. But in doing so, they dislocated 'the exploration of religious truth claims from the task of enabling pupils to live truthful lives' (Wright 2007, p.88). Instead, they sought strategies to make a balance between them, which led to the identification of two distinct attainment targets, identified by Grimmitt as 'dimensional' and 'experiential' and by Edwin Cox as 'religious understanding' and 'understanding religion'¹⁸⁵ (p.88). Grimmitt provides a famous way of integration of the two attainments, using a number of pedagogical strategies, into a formula called 'learning from and learning about' religion (Grimmitt, p35). It aims to be a mutual learning process that encourages pupils 'to evaluate their understanding of religion in personal terms and evaluate their understanding of self in religious terms' (Grimmitt 1987, p.213). However, the fact that its ultimate concern is human development indicates that it is an instrumental approach to RE, hence it also dislocates truth from truthfulness.

¹⁸⁴ J. M. Hull 1970, 1975

¹⁸⁵ E. Cox 1983

The model that is developed is derived from the view, therefore, that the *structure of the curriculum and the choice of content and teaching methods* must *all* be specifically designed or chosen to enable pupils to develop the skills and abilities of being able to apply religious insights to an understanding of their own situations and experiences and to their own self-concept. (Grimmitt 2000, p.36 emphasis original)

Moral and spiritual liberalism paved the way for a further shift in education from content-based curriculum to child-centred curriculum, 'accompanied by a call for education to be more directly relevant to the immediate needs of pupils' (Wright 2000, p.65). However, by the late 1980s this was challenged by 'a resurgent traditionalism ... [desiring] to restore order, in the face of what was considered to be the self-imposed anarchy of progressivism' (p.65). With the increase of tension between progressive and traditionalist visions of education, school education was faced with the question 'What are our schools for?' which opened up the importance of the spiritual dimension. This was reflected in the 1988 Education Act (p.65), which positioned RE as a core curriculum, aimed at promoting 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society' (HMSO 1988, p.1). The Act also specified that RE should reflect Christianity as the main religious tradition of the society, while taking account of other principal religions.

However, as Wright points out, the subsequent development of religious education has kept its normative stance in an inclusive approach (Wright 2000, pp.67ff). The development of an inclusive model of spiritual education grounded on 'a basic, inclusive understanding of spirituality' was consolidated by a discussion book issued by the National Curriculum Council, *Spiritual and Moral Development* (NCC 1993; reissued as SCAA 1995). An anthropological understanding drawn from two contrasting accounts of spirituality appeared in an HM Inspectors' educational discussion book, *Supplement to Curriculum 11-16* (DES/HMI 1997b); it is worth quoting the definition of the inclusive, anthropological account (Wright 2000, p.68):

The spiritual area is concerned with the awareness a person has of those elements in existence and experience which may be defined in terms of inner feelings and beliefs; they affect the way people see themselves and throw light for them on the purpose and meaning of life itself. Often these feelings and beliefs lead people to claim to know God and glimpse the transcendent. (DES/HMI 1997, recited from Wright 2000, p.66)

Although the inclusive model of religious education has become 'a normative influence on spiritual education', working as quasi-authoritative curriculum guidance, there have also been narrow, exclusive forms of religious education.¹⁸⁶ Thus '[t]he tension between [them] ... is a key issue in contemporary spiritual education' (p.68).

At this juncture it may be useful to provide an account of why religious education has come to be dominated by the inclusive forms. This is closely related with the change of the cultural context of society, particularly the change to the comprehensive liberal environment, which has been called 'the dominant ideology of our time' (Wright 2007, p.33). In his critical analysis of liberal religious education and its dominant inclusive model, Wright has noted that the liberal religious education has been formulated, sustained and delivered within the framework of a comprehensive liberalist environment (Wright 2007, pp.79ff). In order to understand the situation he explores features of comprehensive liberalism in contrast to political liberalism (pp.29ff):

Comprehensive liberalism ... constitutes a total worldview that offers an all-encompassing account of the place of humanity in the world; in doing so it reifies the principles of freedom and tolerance and establishes them as ends in themselves, rather than as the means to some greater end. Generally speaking, political liberals are committed to an economy of difference: they recognize that not all accounts of the

¹⁸⁶ Wright introduces four alternative exclusive approaches: Christian Orthodoxy (Adrian Thatcher 1996, 1995a), Religious Universalism (David Hay 1982), Secular Humanism (Mike Newby 1994, 1996) and Post-modern Relativism (Clive Erricker 1993). For a brief account of them, see Wright 2000, pp.77ff.

good life are valid, that the ability of citizens to pursue the good live can be restricted by inequalities deeply ingrained within society, and that the exercise of freedom and tolerance are not ends in themselves but rather the means to the greater end of pursuing the good life in a responsible and informed manner. Comprehensive liberals, on the other hand, tend to be committed to an economy of sameness: contrasting accounts of the good life are treated as equally valid, all citizens are deemed free to pursue their chosen life regardless of their particular circumstances, and the exercise of freedom and tolerance is viewed as an end in itself. (Wright 2007, pp.32-33)

As mentioned earlier, the dominant inclusive model originated in the concern with social integration and harmony in an increasingly plural society, so that it has sought a form of religious education that is as open and accommodating as possible (Wright 2000, p.70). Hence, to Lealman's question, 'Can people who approach education from different philosophical/theological viewpoints find a common working definition?' (pp.70-71, cited from Lealman 1986, p.67), it answers in the affirmative, citing anthropological spirituality. For inclusivists, by assigning the human being as the centre of spirituality, regardless of particular cultural and traditional origin, the inclusive model assumes the 'enhancement of social harmony and stability, rooted in a moral concern for equality of opportunity and drawing on the liberal principle of freedom and tolerance' (Wright 2000, p.71). This approach is based on the assumption of the possibility of the dissociation of people's lives from the particular context or tradition in which they have constituted their identity and worldview.¹⁸⁷ In Wright's term, it is a typical form of the dissociation of truth from truthfulness found in the dominant form of religious education. Moreover, such an assumption is seriously mistaken, because

tolerance is offered to those who embrace the basic values of liberalism as ends in themselves, but denied to those who subscribe to alternative traditions and belief

¹⁸⁷ Such an assumption is possible on the ground of the universal claim of those liberal virtues as constitutive parts of human nature; for example, the ideas of Rousseau on freedom understood as the natural goodness of humanity. For a brief account of the transition to the universal claim, see, Wright 2007, p.32.

systems. Consequently, access to the public sphere is limited to those who espouse liberal values as normative for the good life, while adherents of non-liberal traditions are ostracized and forced to live as resident aliens in a closed comprehensive liberal society. (Wright 2007, p.34-35)

From a political liberalist point of view, although such a common working definition is not possible, such differences, even contested views of ultimate meaning of life or truth claims, should be taken into account in religious education rather than renounced for the sake of harmony, in a manner that 'must seek to enable pupils to engage critically with a diversity of spiritual traditions' in an informed way (p.71). To this end, discrete religious traditions take on particular significance because they are prime bearers of truth. This, according to Wright, should be the default position of critical religious education, as will be seen later.

This leads to the question of how to relate objective study of religion (explicit model) and subjective experience of religion (implicit model) in a critical way. To answer this question, Wright constitutes his critical realist approach, but first he reflects upon the crisis in religious education as represented in its two forms. On the one hand, as mentioned earlier, the pursuit of balance between them has been replaced by the dominance of the inclusive, implicit model which has since become a normative stance, reflecting comprehensive liberal anthropology and liberal humanism. In recent cases, those tackling the issues of diversity have shown that they take a normative stance by rooting their religious education in certain values of wider society, such as human rights (Skeie 2006a; McGrady 2006; Gearon 2002). Characteristic of all this is that religious traditions and their truth claims are reduced to means for the cultivation of certain normative values as ends in themselves, mostly drawn from a comprehensive liberal ethos. On the other hand, there is another type of reductionism in the phenomenologically based teaching, in that learning is reduced to 'the accumulation of factual knowledge at the expense of any existential engagement with the ultimate questions raised by religion' (Wright 2007, p.87). This problem of balance is reflected in *Model*

Syllabuses for Religious Education (SCAA 1994), which introduced explicitly the terminology 'learning about' and 'learning from'. However, although the problem was expressed in terms of balance between two models, Wright's concern is not with balance but with the relationship between them, because '[t]he crisis lay in the absence of any clear understanding of the connection between the two' (p.87).

1.2. The dissociation of truth from truthfulness: on 'learning about' and 'learning from'

Wright argues that absence is rooted in the dislocation of truth from truthfulness, which is seen in liberal religious education particularly in the eclipse of truth (related with 'learning about' religion) and the ascendancy of truthfulness (related with 'learning from' religion).

1.2.1. The eclipse of truth: on learning about religion in liberal religious education

With regard to the eclipse of truth, Wright brings forth a central issue in his approach, viz. religious particularity. For Wright, the eclipse of truth is synonymous with the eclipse of religious particularity, and it has happened in liberal religious education because particularity is there considered as a scandal.

Perhaps the great challenge was that of religious particularity: the fact that different religious and secular traditions offer mutually exclusive accounts of the ultimate order-of-things ... For comprehensive liberals ... the challenge of particularity was seen as a scandal urgently in need of resolution. (Wright 2007, p.90)

This 'urgent need' has been seen in the form of dissipation of the threat of particularity (Wright 2007, pp.90ff). Wright points out three strategies for this dissipation in liberal religious education. The first is to deny the existence of particularity by dissolving discrete religious traditions into a greater whole or by breaking them down into their constituent parts, as reflected in phenomenological and contextual religious education, respectively. The former treats particular religious traditions 'as diverse manifestations of the common generic category of 'religion' ... [as sharing] a common phenomenological structure and [originating] in the same universal experience of transcendence' (p.91). Robert Jackson as a representative of the latter argues that there is no such thing as 'a religion' to be presented as a rigid and bounded system, because of 'contested representations' and 'disputed borders' of particular religious traditions among their adherents (Jackson 2004). Thus Jackson views discrete religions as 'fluid and ever-changing amalgams of the spiritualities of individual adherents' (Wright 2007, p.91). This strategy has circumvented the particularity while securing the comprehensive liberal commitment to the basic values of freedom and tolerance.

The second strategy of dissipation of particularity has been to bracket out contested truth claims of religious particularities from the rational debate. Phenomenological religious education works on the basis of an implied distinction between objective knowledge and subjective opinion, in that it describes the beliefs of religious adherents objectively but treats truth claims, by abiding to a liberal polity, as 'private beliefs rather than contested public knowledge'; hence it can accept description or discussion of those beliefs as a way of learning, but it cannot accept rational debate on 'the truth and falsehood of the realities lying behind such beliefs', and as such it avoids the scandal of particularity (p.92).

The third strategy is to reject the key role of religious language in describing the ultimate order-of-things (pp.92ff). This rejection originates in Schleiermacher's understanding of religion as 'modification of feeling' rather than knowing or doing; hence it marginalises 'the traditional

cognitive-propositional reality-describing understanding of religious language' (p.92). The attenuation of the key role of religious language has given rise to two claims in regard to religious education: 'the claim that religion is a "modification of feeling" identified with transcendent experiences as the basis of religious belief' and 'the claim that religion as essentially a "doing" invites the belief that religious identity is determined by the adherent's action, with religious language functioning merely as a pragmatic guide to behaviour' (pp.92-93). On the ground of the first claim, David Hay develops his approach to religious education, which is concerned with nurturing 'pupils' innate capacity for deep spiritual experience' while considering the truth claims of particular religions as 'culturally relative expressions of a common universal experience of transcendence', hence as relatively inconsequential (p.93; Hay 1982, 1985). By stressing 'doing' John Hull argues for authentic religion as manifesting itself 'not in true belief but in the adoption of non-religionist and non-tribal attitudes and actions', but in doing so, the truth claims of particular religions are marginalised (p.93).

1.2.2. The ascendancy of truthfulness: on learning from religion in liberal religious education

As mentioned earlier, the dominant form of liberal religious education has been an inclusive, implicit model of learning 'from' religion in a particular way, that is, as dissociated from truth. Rooted in the struggle for social integration, it offers a model of spirituality, 'an inclusive common-denominator spirituality' which seeks to be 'as open and accommodating as possible' (Wright 2000, p.63, 70). Wright identifies four central features of this model (pp.72ff):

- (a) *The priority of spiritual experience*, in that spiritual experience is conceived as a fundamental aspect of the human condition that makes us capable of dynamic self-awareness in searching for personal identity, and of a sense of the ultimate meaning of life

in responding to common key experiences of death, suffering, evil and beauty (SCAA 1995). In regard to the relationship with religions '[t]he capacity for spiritual experience resembles, but is not ultimately reducible to, our religious, moral and aesthetic experience. Since such experience is universal it cannot be limited to any specific religious, ethical or artistic tradition, outlook or world-view' (p.72).

(b) *The rejection of materialism and rationalism*, in that it argues for the need to protect the capacity for spiritual insight from the threat of materialism, which is rooted in positivist dogma that rejects unverifiable experiences, by asserting the priority of spiritual experience over such restricted rational reflection (pp.72-73) because '[s]piritual awareness manifests itself first of all in feelings and emotions from which it has to be translated into thought if it is to be talked about at all' (Priestley 1985, p.114).

(c) *Transcendent mystery*, in that there is a degree of suspicion of doctrine, belief and language for describing spiritual experience, even a claim for liberation from the fruitless search for objective truth. Instead it strives for 'a new innocence of perception liberated from the cataract of accepted beliefs' (Lealman 1982, p.62)' and for celebrating the inherent mystery of life (Wright 2000, pp.73-74).

(d) *Educating spiritual sensibility*, in that 'spirituality is to be inculcated and nurtured through the sensitisation of the pupil's curiosity, imagination and intuition'; hence an authentic spiritual education is defined as one that seeks 'to sensitise pupils to a heightened awareness of their personal inner space, stimulate their imagination, nurture their creativity and spark their imagination', and there is greater reliance on the validity of pupils' own inward private experience than on that of religious traditions and their beliefs (p.74).¹⁸⁸

Wright identifies a number of flaws implicit in the inclusive model.

¹⁸⁸ Appealing to inner capacity as more valid than any religious tradition, and encouraging pupils' self-awareness of their inner world are highly congruent with some of key ideals of Bhaskar's meta-Reality, such as the ontological priority of the self and the stress on awakening.

(i) It is flawed in its approach to anthropology because it 'relies on an individualistic anthropology rooted in notions of personal autonomy' (p.75). However, according to Charles Taylor (1992), the notion of the individual in western thought has been formed not only in an introspective way but also in terms of developing relationships with others in community (nature, people and God) (p.75).

(ii) It is flawed in its approach to tradition because it lacks any sense of history, which renders the possibility of dislocation of individuals from their communities and cultural roots.

(iii) It is flawed in its ostensive definition of the function of language because language is a pre-existing reality that conditions individuals' lives and their expressions of experience. Hence, 'seeking meaning no longer means spelling out consciousness but, rather, deciphering its expressions' (Ricoeur 1974, p.149). This suggests that religious education should teach pupils 'both to feel *and* communicate appropriately about their ultimate values and ultimate reality' (Wright 2000, p.76).

(iv) It is flawed for its stress on unreflective experience, which might open up 'the possibility of a spiritual emotivism detached from critical reflection', and result in 'the tendency to assume that the stronger the emotion, then the more authentic the experience, and ... the more justified we are to act upon them'. By balancing the two strands there might be '*a better chance* of producing appropriate levels of spiritual sensitivity and literacy' (p.76).

(v) It is flawed in its 'lack of material content ... its failure to relate experience with the reality of how things actually are in the world' (p.77). In order to be inclusive of a range of opinions in directing the attention of experience to whatever object, the model deliberately avoids specifying objects but 'encourages pupils to develop their own personal and idiosyncratic visions of ultimate reality'. Hence it fails to address effectively questions about the relationship between the truth of ultimate reality and my perceptions of ultimate truth, about the possibility that my perceptions might be false, because the model's default

position is to impose upon pupils a post-modern stance for problem solving, 'in which the only truth is the truth expressed by the individual pupil ... [and] the outward freedom disguises a subtle yet pervasive indoctrination of pupils into a post-modern world-view' (p.77).

(vi) Overall, the inclusive model 'constitutes a distinctive – and hence exclusive – spiritual tradition grounded in a mish-mash of romantic and post-modern ideology', and as such it 'effectively silences the voices of alternative minority spiritual traditions' (p.70).

Seen from the point of otherness, two further flaws of the inclusive model can be added to Wright's critique.

(1) First and foremost, the inclusive model is grounded in the interpretation of spiritual experience by referring mainly to oneself, so that it is characterised as subjective feeling or experience, as solely inner process. As such, it loses sight of the otherness of whatever brought the experience. Exalting spiritual experience while keeping it in the level of individual inner significance is, according to Zizioulas, to invite danger of Desire for Desire, the infinite desiring for the transcendental experience itself; having lost realist contact with reality, or personal relation with the other, what remains is the desiring self (Zizioulas 2006, pp.49ff).

(2) The problem of otherness is also seen in the model's understanding of language and anthropology. A peculiar characteristic feature of otherness is its essential relation with language. In Levinas' philosophy, the genuine 'speaking' is initiated only when engaged with the other; in Trinitarian theology, God reveals Himself to us in his *Word*, that is, the mode of God's personhood. By speaking to us He lets us be his other as well as letting Himself be our other in personal relation. What is crucially missing here is 'speaking'; the stress is solely upon speculative self-awareness, talking to oneself as if it were the true mode of human being, which it is not.

Wright is deeply concerned about the failure of contemporary spiritual education to allow pupils to engage critically with both the issues associated with their spiritual experience (truthfulness) and the ultimate truth claims provided by their religious or secular tradition (truth). Instead, it has offered two uncritically related ways of learning 'from' and 'about' religion. In the next section we will attend to Wright's exploration of critical religious education by focusing on the grounding conception of truth and truthfulness and the stress on 'particularity' of discrete religion as the default position of religious education.

2. Critical Religious Education: Ontology and Otherness

2.1. Pursuit of truth and truthfulness

Why does truth matter? A pivotal argument of Wright's work is that 'religious education should enable pupils to wrestle with ultimate truth' in an informed manner (Wright 2007, p.7). However, he also recognises that there has been misrepresentation, the introduction of distorted and perverted images of truth into modern society,¹⁸⁹ which have impoverished society by employing strategies of evasion of truth rather than retrieval (Wright, 2007, p.7). The eclipse of truth in contemporary religious education has been one of the consequences. In order not to leave a space where truth claims once stood, religious education has recruited comprehensive liberalism to fill the gap. This has resulted in the dissociation of truth from truthfulness in that the former has been eclipsed in the forms of the 'learning about' approach, while the latter has been overshadowed by the dominance of the inclusive, implicit, 'learning from' approach to religious education.

¹⁸⁹ The term truth claims' conjures up with secular images of totalitarianism, religiously fundamentalism and educational indoctrination (Wright, 2007, p.7).

In response, Wright has sought over the years to develop a critical religious education, employing critical realism throughout the process of development of the approach.¹⁹⁰ Earlier in his response to the problem Wright noted the possibility of critical realism as a proper philosophical perspective for spiritual education, which was already dominated by the inclusive model (Wright 2000). There he presented central aspects of critical realism in terms of stratified reality, unity of fact and value, wisdom and contingent knowledge (pp.23ff). Later he provided a fuller account of critical realism, developing further its potential for critical religious education by articulating it in terms of ‘the primes of critical realism’ (Wright 2004, pp.52ff). There he used the terms truth and truthfulness more explicitly in regard to critical religious education in general and to the critical realist perspective for religious education in particular. Central aspects of critical realism were more deeply engaged with and related to the issues of the association of truth and truthfulness in terms of holistic wisdom. With regard to prominent aspects of critical realism, he introduced the transfactual quality of knowledge as authentic knowledge in terms of ‘trans-phenomenal and counter-phenomenal’, which reflects both the stratification of reality and the holy trinity of critical realism (ontological realism, epistemic relativism and judgemental rationalism) as the way to reach the deeper level of reality (p.60). Hence he stressed that critical realism maintains a kind of minimalism in regard to truth claims, because knowledge and rationality, as parts of central mediums to truth claims, are contingent, subject to correction under the light of the real of reality. What is needed in the process is to be ‘guided by the contingent judgements of probability and warrant rather than proof and demonstration’ (p.60), which reflects Bhaskar’s critique of empirical realism, particularly empirical positivism. Then Wright worked out the need for association of truth and truthfulness by explaining the need to move from knowledge to wisdom, because ‘[a]ny truthful and authentic engagement with the world requires the cultivation of a holistic wisdom’ (p.60). By ‘holistic’ Wright

¹⁹⁰ Wright has not focused exclusively on critical realism in developing his approach. Rather he has embraced a broader range of philosophical positions and thinkers, seeking to combine a modernist concern to engage with the actual order-of-things with a post-modern recognition of the limits of our knowledge and understanding (p.52). However, it is also true that critical realism cannot be replaced by any other perspective, since it has taken a pivotal role in grounding the central concept of truth and truthfulness in his approach.

means to overcome the modern polarity between objectivism and the romantic/postmodern celebration of subjective opinion, and hence 'wisdom' means, quoting Hodgson, the constitution of 'a complex cognitive stance that includes apprehension and appreciation as well as critical reflection and an orientation to practice based on life experience' (p. 60; Hodgson 1999, p.7). In the case of religious education, where objective learning about and subjective learning from are divided without a proper critical relationship, the cultivation of wisdom would be 'dependent on the collapsing of this distinction between sense and sensibility and the recovery of forms of knowledge that are *simultaneously rational and personal*' (p.60 emphasis added); a pursuit of simultaneity between 'rational' knowledge as drawn from the learning about, and 'personal' from the learning from. At this point we can understand the reason for the direction of development of Wright's critical religious education, which he has recently worked out under the title *Critical Religious Education, Multiculturalism and the Pursuit of Truth* (Wright 2007), in which he states:

The intimate relationship between truth and truthfulness suggests the organic unity of religious education: the search for truth and pursuit of truthful living ought to form twin aspects of a single process. (Wright 2007, p.55)

2.1.1. Truth and otherness

As Wright reveals in his opening sentence: 'The central argument of this book is that religious education should enable pupils to wrestle with ultimate truth' (Wright 2007, p.7). From this we can easily imagine the crucial role of critical realism, of which the most obvious influence can be found in Wright's conceptualisation of truth and ultimate truth. From a critical realist understanding of reality, Wright commences the book by reintroducing the holy trinity of critical realism (pp.8ff). He does this on the working assumption that reality is out there and independent of our knowledge of it. Furthermore, reality is conceived as stratified according to the ontological levels

of the real, the actual and the empirical, in that the possibility of 'explanation' of reality is attributed to the inherent structures or mechanisms of reality, whether of natural things or social beings. Hence it is possible to speak of 'a primary *ontological truth*' and of 'the secondary *semantic truth*', of which the latter is contingent, provisional truth so that it constitutes epistemic relativism, meaning that 'we cannot limit the order-of-things to our ability to know it, or reduce reality to the sum or our true statement' (p.12). The concept of contingent knowledge presupposes the possibility of fallibility of human knowledge; hence it requires rational judgements. Against the charge of radical scepticism in regard to such judgement this position argues that 'we do have relatively secure knowledge of the world', while against the charge of the advocacy of absolute certainty it is argued that 'our knowledge of the world is limited and contingent' (pp.12-13). Critical judgement is what relates our relatively contingent/certain hence transitive epistemic truth claims, and the intransitive ontological reality (p.13).

Crucial to Wright's conceptualisation of truth is his distinction between reality and ultimate reality, in that the latter is conceived in terms of the possibility of ultimate explanation. It is worth quoting his explanation of the distinction:

[T]he fact that we can explain an event or object in a number of complementary and irreducible ways does not preclude us from asking questions about the meaning of reality *as a whole*: although a rich explanation ought to embrace as many disciplinary insights as possible, the question remains as to the possibility of some *ultimate* explanation. This is not reductionist explanation: it is not so much a question of affirming one disciplinary insight over all others ... This raises the issue of the distinction between reality and ultimate reality: the former refers to the sum of all that exists, in all its stratified and multifaceted complexity; the latter refers to the enduring principle, power, force, mind or being that grounds reality and provides it with its fundamental

organizing structure, and hence its ultimate meaning, purpose and direction. (Wright 2007, p.21)

Wright provides three contrasting accounts of the ultimate order-of-beings in order to clarify this distinction (2007, pp.21f): Christian worldviews in which the ultimate reality consists in God alone; Buddhist understanding of reality with regard to the ultimate goal of Nirvana, that is, awakening, enlightenment and the cessation of desire; and a naturalist account of the ultimate reality of the universe. Among them is constituted mutual exclusivism, and the fact that truth claims are contested, controversial and even contrasting. However, if the comprehensive liberal approach aims to avoid those particular truth claims by dissociating them into objective studies or by subjective absorbing in the context of religious education, the political liberal approach aims not to avoid the contentious issues but to engage them critically in an informed way. For Wright it might be possible in critically informed learning to explore whether the reality beyond the truth claim is true or false. This is because the pursuit of truth in religious education has intrinsic value when it is secured in an informed and balanced judgement, and learning to perform such judgement would be a crucial way to live in harmony with the ultimate order-of-things, to achieve wisdom for life (pp.122ff). On the basis of the conceptualisation of truth and ultimate truth, Wright provides seven propositions, of which the last is related with 'truthfulness', which we will consider later.

Proposition 1: Truth is the totality of all that is

Proposition 2: Our knowledge of reality is partial and contingent

Proposition 3: We can make critical judgments between conflicting accounts of reality

Proposition 4: Reality is ordered, complex and multifaceted

Proposition 5: It is reasonable to ask questions about ultimate meaning and purpose

Proposition 6: The ultimate nature of reality is contested

Proposition 7: A truthful life is one lived in harmony with ultimate reality

(Wright 2007, pp.26-27)

There are some points to be made on Wright's conceptualisation of ultimate truth with regard to otherness. Previously, this thesis has argued that critical realism, particularly its core argument of transcendental realism, is characterised by lack of ontology of otherness, which constitutes the point of divergence on the issue of ultimate reality between Bhaskarian non-personal meta-Reality and the Trinitarian personhood of God. The possibility has been raised of judgement between the two contrasting accounts of ultimate truth claims in terms of the best inferred explanation of reality in regard to the crucial ontological dimension of otherness; hence the Trinitarian personhood account has been inferred as the better explanation of otherness. Thus, the focus on ontology has led the thesis to the issue of otherness, then ontology of personhood in its concern with ultimate reality, while Bhaskar's ontology, although starting from the same theory, takes a contrasting trajectory in regard to ultimate reality. The cause of this difference is otherness.

What does this mean for Wright's conceptualisation of truth? Since Wright also grounds his conception of ultimate truth on critical realist ontology it seems that there are points to be made in relation to the two accounts of transcendence above. First, Wright's conceptualisation of truth and ultimate reality takes a relatively neutral position, being grounded on his uncritical reception of transcendental realism, particularly in regard to the absence of otherness. His conception of ultimate reality as 'the enduring principle, power, force, mind or being that grounds reality and provides it with its fundamental organizing structure, and hence its ultimate meaning, purpose and direction' (p.21) indicates that it is grounded on the transfactual understanding of reality, which is significantly true but intrinsically unable to address the other as truly the other, or is able to address

the other only in the horizon of oneself. Thus his ontological conceptualisation of ultimate truth may possibly provide religious education with a middle field to which various contested truth claims can legitimately be brought in order to be critically engaged.¹⁹¹ Although in its very claim of ‘ultimate reality’ it may not be fully true to itself because, as long as it holds fast to critical realism and if it considers the point of otherness seriously, as argued in this thesis, it should take either a Bhaskarian non-personal account or a personal account that is able to explain otherness, such as that of the Trinitarian God, by remaining in the middle it may be a strategic choice for enhancing religious education in a critical way.¹⁹² Second, the argument of otherness developed up to the point of personhood of God may provide an example and a criterion for critically informed judgement between contrasting accounts of ultimate reality. Since Wright has insisted upon the need for informed critical judgement between contrasting ultimate truth claims as a way of cultivating religious literacy among pupils, the theme of ‘otherness’ might be a useful criterion against which different ultimate truth claims are measured. Furthermore, the way of argument about otherness taken in this thesis may enhance critical realist education by providing an example of how to deal with controversial issues in religious education.

2.1.2. Truthfulness and personhood

Truthfulness is cognate to truth. In response to the dissociation of truth from truthfulness in comprehensive religious education Wright insists that ‘a religious education concerned with truth must also address the challenge of how to live life truthfully – that is to say, in harmony with ultimate reality’ (Wright 2007, p.14). In this regard, Wright raises two questions: ‘What is *our place*

¹⁹¹ Thompson raises a point about this middle field in terms of ‘openness’ when she critiques those religious education professionals, including Wright, who ‘[a]ll are concerned to teach in a way that avoids a relativism which endangers all religions. At the same time all seem reluctant to base RE on one particular religion, while accepting at the same time that no education ... can be neutral. They wish to place “openness” centre stage’ (Penny Thomson, 2004, *Whatever Happened to Religious Education?* Cambridge, The Lutterworth Press, p.149).

¹⁹² In fact, in another recent book, he critically engages the exclusivism in Bhaskar’s meta-Reality, contrasting it with Christian exclusivism. There he critiques the former in terms of its judgemental relativism (Wright 2012).

in the actual order-of-things? What is the meaning and purpose of life here on earth?' (p.14 emphasis added). An interpretation of these questions may reveal a characteristic of his understanding of truthfulness. As we have seen earlier, in the inclusive model of religious education, truthfulness of life has often been assigned to the responsibility of the autonomous individual, while objective study of knowledge of religious or secular beliefs remains as instrumental for the possibility of inner spiritual, awakening or learning experiences, which will then be measured by the basic values of comprehensive liberalism, such as freedom, tolerance and, for example, human rights. Behind all this there is presupposed a form of relationship between a broader society and its individuals: the individual is relatively autonomous in society, and hence finds meaning of life not necessarily or exclusively from the outer world but through reflective process of the self upon the outer world. In that process the self is always in the centre of spirituality. As Bernard Williams points out in his critique of the dissociation of truth and truthfulness, this indicates the feature of contemporary society whereby there is no necessary connection between the pursuit of the truth of the world and my particular understanding of the world, because of a deep scepticism among people regarding the pursuit of truth (Williams 2002). But with these questions, Wright highlights a reverse situation, in that we are still in relation with the world, but not the 'outer world', which presupposes separatedness of the individual, rather the world in which we have our place in the order-of-things. Truthfulness in this reversed relationship is defined as the life guided by the seeker's ontologically true place, then by living in harmony with the truth of reality. Though our knowledge of the world is contingent, 'we can still establish substantial understanding of the world', hence we should strive to understand our true place in the ultimate order-of-things (Wright 2007, p.17).

The idea of truthfulness as dissociated from truth cannot be sustained in the Trinitarian understanding either. Rather, in this tradition, it is intrinsically *truthful* to seek the truth of reality and to live by it because this is exactly how a person to be. Now, in regard to the notion of personhood, Wright's conception of truthfulness as being in harmony with truth needs careful clarification. When we speak of truthful life as being in harmony with the truth of reality, the reality

of the world is not conceived as static, nor does being in harmony with reality mean a mere reaction; rather being truthful is to 'respond' hence to 'relate' from my true reality that is personhood. Here we define truthfulness in terms of Trinitarian hypostatical personal relation with the truth of nature, people, tradition or God. In all those relations we can and should keep the quality of personal relation, otherwise we may fall into being reified, being oppressed or alienated. We must remember that personhood is prior to 'necessity': God loves us not because He has to but in his freedom; He is not bound to necessity. This is where personhood makes the difference from the critical realist perspective: whereas personhood moves to the other, outer being and other reality not from certain necessity but in his ontological personhood as personal act in freedom, for critical realism there is a strong sense of necessity or principle, like non-duality, which is characterised as non-personal. The latter is ultimately bound in itself while personhood in its very *mode* of being always moves (*ekstasis*) to the other, hence being in relation as a person (*hypostasis*). Thus, when we say that truthful life is in harmony with reality, this should not be interpreted as relegating personhood by bounding truthfulness to a necessity. Truth is greater than necessity because it always comes out of *personal* striving to know the other (reality) as it is, and in order to do so, the pursuit of truth lets the other be as much as it is; pursuit of truth always presupposes otherness and hence the pursuit of truth is already truthfulness. However, as Wright stresses, since our transitive epistemic truth is contingent, our truthful striving to truth of reality needs to be guided and informed by best inferred explanation. This is particularly so when we are concerned with ultimate truth. Since the pursuit of truth in religious education cannot be reduced to the level of individual epistemic construction, although it certainly contains that dimension, it must start from a certain place and should be organised in a realist way. We will deal with this point by exploring Wright's ontological framework for the pursuit of ultimate truth.

2.2. Ontological framework and otherness

Wright provides a heuristic conceptual framework for critical religious education. It comprises four dimensions, reflecting four contemporary perspectives of religious education: ontological, semantic, hermeneutic and epistemological (Wright 2007, pp.131ff). However, here we will explore only the ontological dimension because, since ontology has been the central subject of the thesis, to which otherness has been raised as its cognate, a consideration of the ontological dimension of his approach to religious education can render a certain degree of consistency and lead us to a point where we can see the usefulness and limits of the application of Bhaskarian critical realism in Wright's critical religious education.

2.2.1. Transcendental realism of ultimate truth claim

The conceptual framework of the ontological dimension has two main foci: transcendental realism of ultimate truth claim and particularity of discrete religion as the default position of religious education. In this section we will deal with the first ontological focus. By way of transcendental realism Wright aims to provide a conceptual framework that can include both theistic and non-theistic religious traditions, provided they hold realist accounts of transcendental reality (pp.132ff). The concept of 'realist account' is applied here in its minimal sense which requires two points to be met: reality conceived as existing independently of our ability to know it, and as ontologically distinct from us. This might be applied to both religious and secular accounts, each with its own claim for truthful life with its particular stance on life,¹⁹³ but in regard to ultimate truth there is a distinction between them. This difference lies in 'the substance of their respective belief

¹⁹³ Religious educational models that take both religious and secular worldviews as worthy of acceptance in the course can be found, for example, in the Birmingham *Agreed Syllabus of Religious Instruction* (City of Birmingham Education Committee, 1975) and its practical manual for teachers *Living Together* (City of Birmingham Education Committee, 1975).

systems', which appeal either to transcendental order or to natural order, respectively (p.133).¹⁹⁴ In a key thesis Wright advocates the former in terms of 'supranatural', because 'the religions are *in the main* concerned with a supranatural reality' and '[s]upranatural belief [is] sufficiently normative of religion in general to constitute an appropriate heuristic vantage point from which we can go on to address and contrast pantheistic, naturalistic and non-realistic alternative' (p.134). This is because both naturalist and anti-naturalist approaches are mistaken, particularly in their reductionist understanding of ultimate truth claims of religions. He refutes this reductionism in four points (pp.136-140): on the ground of the realist truth claim embodied in the historical continuity of religious tradition; on the ground of realist understanding of religious language; by revealing the tag of religious pragmatism as a product of modern western thought and post-modernism, and by revealing the functionalist account of spirituality as unsustainable.

In Wright's refutation of the reductionist charges against the transcendental realist account of ultimate truth, a particular point claims our attention with regard to the theme of otherness that has been developed here. The point is about religious language; let us start from a functional understanding of religious language.

The suggestion [of the reductionist] that we should not take religious truth claims at face value is dependent upon a distinctively Western post-Enlightenment agenda. (Wright 2007, p.137)

According to Wright, what is presupposed here is a distinction between the domains of fact and value, which are conceived as belonging to different language games from each other: considering 'theological statement as expression of inner spiritual experience [value] rather than realistic description [fact] of reality' or 'reducing religious language to functional role for enabling religious adherent's life flourishing [value] rather than its commitment to depict reality [fact]' (p.137).

¹⁹⁴ For example, Ninian Smart's six dimensional study of religion indicates that two broad categories can be distinguished: historical, containing ritualistic, experiential and social dimensions; and parahistorical, containing doctrinal, mythological and ethical dimensions. The former category is more likely to be related with the life of religious communities, the latter with belief systems (Smart 1968).

This identifies religious language in terms of its function or pragmatic truth, which results in ‘a thoroughgoing relativism’ (p.138). Against the functional understanding of religious language Wright argues that ‘in most religious traditions there is a direct and necessary link between beliefs about the nature of ultimate reality and the spiritual search for salvation or enlightenment’ (p.138). At this juncture, there is one further point to be added in regard to the other and otherness. As we have seen, in Levinas’s thought and in Trinitarian theology, language event is a characteristic phenomenon appearing in the event of transcendence. In Levinasian philosophy, in the encounter with the face of the other as the transcendental experience, the I gives itself to the other by way of ‘speaking’ or ‘saying’ before its egoistic comprehension of the other; in Trinitarian theology, God is revealed to us as the Word incarnate. What this indicates is that otherness accompanies *language event*, which sets the whole quality of being of one who engages with the other or God on a different ground, for example, on the ethical ground or the hypostatic personal relation, respectively; the language event cannot be reduced to expression of ‘self-consciously non-realistic pragmatism’ that is ‘incapable of explaining the phenomenon of deeply rooted commitment, and in particular the willingness ... to the point of martyrdom’ (p.139). This incapability is linked precisely to the point made earlier regarding the qualitative difference between freedom of the dialectical agent and ethics of ethical subjectivity, where it was argued that freedom cannot be taken as naturally necessitating ethics; rather ethics can incorporate freedom in its responsible act for the other.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, language event is more likely to be related with the hypostatically *personal* account of ultimate truth than with a non-personal account, as we have seen in the comparison between the Trinitarian God as Person and Bhaskarian meta-Reality, where the latter, with its characteristic absence of otherness, gives its ultimate emphasis to self-awakening of what is inside, and in doing so recognises not language event with the other, but the rise of consciousness of the self. When this ethos is applied to religious education it could fit closely with a sort of radical constructivist educational approach in which pupils are encouraged to use religious language not to depict reality

¹⁹⁵ See, the concluding remarks of Chapter 3.

behind the language, hence moving to the other, but to build their own meaning structure by subjecting religious language to their schema according to its viability. In this sense it can be said that Wright's critique of the inclusive model could be applied to a non-personal account of ultimate truth. But what about a type of religious education that is grounded on personal account of transcendental realism? While Wright's transcendental realism of ultimate truth claim does not specify whether it should be about a personal or non-personal account of ultimate reality, it can still be considered as a step forward to otherness in the sense that the conception of 'transcendental' as supernatural may be a conceptual framework that provides pupils with a chance to face otherness between two contrasting accounts of ultimate reality without being circumscribed by comprehensive liberal attempts to attenuate otherness; rather pupils are encouraged to critically engage with that otherness. In order for this to be possible there is another ontological point to be considered, to which we turn next.

2.2.2. Particularity of discrete religion as the default position

If a non-personal account of ultimate reality runs the risk of leading religious education into an inclusive model, then such an account should be regarded as a particular stance rather than a universal stance that claims for a generic notion of religion. Such a generic concept can be found in phenomenological study of religion. Barnes' key concern lies in the application of this approach to religious education. Phenomenological religious education has shown a tendency to avoid engaging seriously with critical issues such as assessing rival religions, doctrinal schemes or religious truth claims proper, while focusing on individual religious experience. More specifically, the focus is upon the significance of the experience rather than the significance of the particular religious reality that gave rise to the experience (Barnes 2006). Thus it gives rise both to a generic notion of religion, an

inclusive identification of different religions (Wright 2007, pp144ff),¹⁹⁶ and to an emphasis on the significance of religious experience. Consequently, on the basis of the misconception of the nature of religion in terms of primacy of experience, the phenomenological approach sidesteps one of the most controversial issues in relation to religion: 'that of assessing religious claims to truth and adjudicating between rival (conceptual) claims to religious truth' (Barnes 2001, p.455). Barnes argues that the failure to take seriously such critical issues as assessing truth claims leads to a failure to recognise serious differences between religions whose ultimate truths are seen as mostly mutually exclusive. Instead, he takes seriously these differences, or the otherness of one religion to others, because this otherness is what makes a religion to be conceived as it is. On this ground he argues that religious education should be based on the recognition of such otherness, which is mostly apparent in different doctrinal schemes (Barnes 2009). Therefore, to take otherness seriously in religious education is to admit the point made by McGrath of the unavoidability of 'seeing' truth claims from a particular position (McGrath 2002, 2009).

The importance of particularity is taken into account in Wright's ontological framework of critical religious education, because discrete religious traditions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam all provide their particular stance of transcendent truth claims (Wright 2007, pp.140ff). Given the variety of transcendental truth claims, how to approach that variety is a controversial issue. Wright introduces three competing candidates, namely, discrete religious traditions, the notion of generic category of religion and personal spirituality, and he argues for discrete religion as the default position of religious education.

Although most religious educators recognize the need for some level of dialogue between all three, there is no agreement as to which of them offers the most appropriate default position against which to compare and contrast the others. I will argue that it is indeed discrete religious traditions that ought to constitute the starting

¹⁹⁶ For Wright's critique of the generic notion of religion in terms of its impossibility as essence in relation with a form of theological universalism, see, Wright 2007, pp.144ff.

point for the exploration of transcendent truth, and thus provide the contest for the subsequent exploration of religion as a universal category and of personal spirituality.

(Wright 2007, p.141)

Wright argues for discrete religious tradition as the default position in the debate between theological exclusivism and theological inclusivism, because this debate raises ‘a crucial ontological question: do discrete religious traditions offer complementary or incompatible accounts of the ultimate nature of reality?’ (p. 143) If their accounts are reconcilable then the generic notion of religion should be prioritised, but if they are mutually exclusive then the status of primary bearers of transcendental truth claims should be assigned to discrete religious traditions. He provides theological and philosophical critiques of generic approaches to religious education in terms of the reification of religion while ignoring particular truth claims, the impossibility of identifying the core essence or structure of religion, its biased account into philosophical idealism and theological universalism and its largely spurious moral charge of religionism¹⁹⁷ against discrete religious traditions (pp. 144-147). The aspects that Wright refutes are linked to comprehensive liberalism in which ‘particular truth claims ought to be rejected because they tend to undermine social harmony’; crucial to this is that comprehensive liberal education ‘constitutes an explicit form of confessionalism, concerned to induct pupils into the normative beliefs and values of a closed liberal system’ in which all religions are treated as equally true, which ‘goes against the grain of the self-understanding of the vast majority of religious traditions’ (p.147-148). Since Wright positions himself in political liberalism, he argues for critical religious education grounded in that stance, so that ‘pupils are required to engage with a diverse range of contrasting and conflicting interpretations of religion in an informed and reflective way’ (p.148), which involves openness to the fact that ‘the history of religion is a story of conflict and dissent, often bloody, as well as of striving for peace and reconciliation’ (Yates 1988, p.143; cf. Wright 2007, p.148).

¹⁹⁷ By religionism, Wright means that which ‘engender[s] tribalistic attitudes and threaten[s] the stability of society’ (Wright 2007, p.147). The problem of religionism in regard to religious education was originally raised by John Hull.

Moreover, there is another dimension to the exclusivism/inclusivism debate that helps Wright to take discrete religion as the default position of religious education. As we have seen, the exclusive position argues for the exclusive validity of its particular account of reality of religion, while the inclusive position recognises the differences between particular accounts, and then suggests the generic category of religion. Both are dangerous because while theological exclusivism may fail to recognise certain religious aspects of dynamics gleaned by cross-cultural comparison, theological inclusivism may violate the particularities that make each religion distinct. Having recognised those dangers Wright gives two reasons for treating discrete religious traditions as the departure from the critical realist point of view: (1) to say truth is contingent is to admit that contested truth claims are being engaged directly rather than avoided in such a generic inclusive way, and (2) discrete religions are partial (open) totalities which are not 'essential entities, but as substantial yet dynamic, malleable and emergent realities whose identities develop – at least in part – in response to other religious and secular spiritualities and traditions' (p.141). Critical religious education reflects these points by requiring pupils 'to engage with a number of variant readings and draw their own informed conclusion' because '[t]his, in the long term at least, constitutes the best means of helping establish and preserve social harmony' (p.148).

Finally, against individual personal spirituality, Wright argues that 'the identity of discrete religious traditions is grounded in the collective intentionality of the tradition as a whole, which is ontologically prior to the intentionality of individual adherents' (p.155). This does not mean that collective intentionality regulates individual identity; rather it reflects constitutive agreement from its adherents. This makes it possible to conceive of discrete religious communities not as essentialised entities or arbitrary social constructions, but as 'substantial social facts' which as 'salvific communities' offer 'holistic worldviews oriented around the unity of belief and practice, rather than the atomistic spiritual experiences of individuals' (pp.155-156). Hence language that individuals use for the description of their spiritual experiences is not free from religious language, nor is it purely self-construction: 'they form part of the stories and narratives – more properly, the

meta-narratives – through which religious believers make sense of their lives. Such meta-narratives form part of the worldviews of both religious and secular faith traditions’ (p.180).

Religious education therefore should provide an opportunity for critical engagement between pupils’ horizons of meaning gained from their specific experiences and the horizons of discrete religious traditions in a critically hermeneutic manner¹⁹⁸ that is ‘oriented towards the contested issue of transcendence truth’ so that critical religious can be formed by attending ‘to the process of making informed critical judgements between conflicting truth claims’ (pp.205-206). To make such informed judgements, Wright suggests a critical contextual epistemology, which ‘entails weighing up a raft of probabilities by attending to a range of different authorities’, and, finally, identifies five criteria that constitute ‘the appropriate milieu’ for such judgement: ‘a holistic model of faith-seeking understanding, combining reason, feeling, thought and action in a unified practical wisdom’ (p.230). These criteria, however, should not be limited to critical judgement but should be conceived as implying ways of pursuit of truth and truthfulness.

2.3. Pursuit of truth and truthfulness: ontology and otherness

Now the chapter faces its final question of how we can *pursue* truth and truthfulness in religious education in the light of both ontology and otherness. For Wright, education is both nurture and critique (Wright 1999; 2000): it will inevitably nurture pupils into ‘a particular worldview, will inevitably transmit a set of values and ultimate spiritual commitments’. This does not mean conformity within schools, but encouraging pupils to work out ‘their own relationship with their school’s fundamental views’ (Wright 1999, p.37). Nurture in this sense is defined as the ground of critique, because in order for education as nurture not to be abused it is of utmost importance that the other pivotal dimension of learning process, viz. critique, be maintained. Wright advocates

¹⁹⁸ Wright draws his critical hermeneutics largely from Gadamer (1979) and Habermas (1989, 1991).

critical education not only for emancipation through the empowerment of pupils, but also for the search for the truth in spiritual education, whereby teaching spirituality should be a controversial issue (Wright 2000). The embracing of controversial issues in the search for truth leads Wright to argue for the dialectics of nurture and critique in religious education because 'the adoption of core values need not rule out healthy dissent within the community; indeed such dissent may well form the catalyst for further spiritual growth within the community' (Wright 1999, pp.37-38).

What we see here is a form of dialectical openness to the other, implied in the term 'happy dissent', which indicates recognition of otherness to the degree that it opens to a horizon of the other, and certainty of intellectual and uncertainty of receptivity of uncertainty (transcendence) become complementary with each other. Wright, in his reading of Levinas and Derrida, appraises them for their position that 'the dogmatic certainty that the only reality is that which we create for ourselves is replaced with a thoroughgoing openness to the horizon of the Other', hence he claims that 'we must be humble in our judgments, and actively resist any premature closure of understanding'. But Wright also points out a danger in their position whereby the commitment to alterity may transform itself 'into yet another closed meta-narrative grounded in a thoroughgoing and systematic agnosticism'. Thus he argues that there is no need to consider the commitment to listen to the other as obscuring what is already known or as requiring the suspension of the faculty of reason, because '[i]ntellectual and receptivity are complementary, not mutually exclusive, virtues' (Wright 2004, p.63-64).

This indicates a kind of double openness. First we can say that there is a dimension of receptivity, that is openness to the other in a way of receiving the other; a mode of being characterised with non-agential moment, which takes ontological priority as seen in Levinasian 'first teaching' and the Trinitarian revelation of the Word. Wright's conception of nurture in a particular tradition is also basically constituted by receptivity of the other. In this sense Bhaskar's conceptions of 'disposition' and 'arrangement' of human agency into a specific geo-historical place should also be

understood in terms of receptivity before they are considered as fundamental constituents of reason, which in turn is conceived as a property of human agency. Being nurtured is primarily being opened to the other. Therefore, while growing up in a particular tradition is inevitable, it does not preclude openness to otherness since without the receptivity of its tradition there would be no beginning of life or 'self' at all. Whether conceiving human being as created or as thrown into the world, what is fundamentally acknowledged is the priority of non-agential event of givenness, being disposed-ness and receptivity of the given particular tradition. The problem is whether the receptivity (and nurture) leads to continual openness toward pursuit of truth and truthfulness, which inevitably requires continual openness to the other, or remains in comprehensive closure in self-confidential totality as claimed in comprehensive liberalist individual. This claim of the ontological priority of receptivity contrasts with the claim of radical constructivism, in that the fundamental priority or weight is given to the role of the organic function of schema-making of an individual. Since the latter presupposes ontological priority of an individual, the other is always considered as secondary and placed at the hands of the individual in his construction of his world. Hence, in the constructivist understanding there is conceived only the process of assimilation and accommodation, but not a genuine sense of 'critique' as Levinas stressed (Levinas ...) . While assimilation and accommodation always work on the ground of meaning system of my horizon, the face of the other appears regardless of my meaning system or my horizon; appearing as a breach of my totality it becomes the very critique of my being and the very moment of transcendence. The first dimension of openness, articulated as receptivity, revelation or transcendence, leads to the second dimension of openness. As a consequence of the first openness, somehow we become able to see critically, as Wright argues; to respond to the other, as Levinas argues, in an ethical way of giving ourselves by attending to the other through 'saying', 'expression' and 'substitution'; to love the other in freedom not from (dialectical) necessity but from the ground of personhood, as Trinitarian theology teaches us. This double openness can be termed simply 'being beloved and being loving'. Therefore, pursuit of truth and truthfulness in the sense of the double openness that is grounded only on the ontology of

otherness indicates the intimate relationship between truth and truthfulness, which 'suggests the organic unity of religious education: the search for truth and pursuit of truthful living ought to form twin aspects of a single process' (Wright 2007, p.55).

3. Concluding Remarks: Ontology and Otherness and Possibility of Christianity in Religious Education in Christian Schools

Motivated by concern over the dominant inclusive model of religious education, Wright has developed a critical realist approach to religious education. As we have seen, he critiques both generic understanding of religion and its related implicit, inclusive model of religious education for their epistemic fallacy. With regard to the generic notion of religion, there is a Kantian *a priori* structure employed by the human mind in order to imagine an abstract notion of religion beyond the particular religious truth claims, which in turn, when related to the inclusive model, becomes supplementary for pupils' individual construction of meaning as a form of exercise of their autonomy in the religious education classroom, but in doing so it tends to reduce ultimate truth claims of particular religions to instruments of individual meaning structure, as often found in postmodern forms of education such as radical constructivism. Wright points out that such postmodernist spirituality in religious education tends to produce religious illiteracy among pupils (Wright ...).

As an antidote to these weaknesses, Wright has introduced to religious education the pursuit of ontological realist understanding of truth of religions, incorporating this with pupils' critical engagement with those ultimate truth claims. This approach is based on a critical realist understanding of stratification of reality, so that he is able to argue for ultimate truth as the highest level of reality. However, since ultimate truth claims of particular religious or secular traditions cannot be assumed to be simply harmonious with each other, and are often contrasting, Wright has

pointed out three crucial points: first, religious education should take truth as a controversial issue rather than avoiding it by bracketing it into a ready-made set of generic notions of religion, what is in fact an ideological bracketing of religion into comprehensive liberal principles of freedom and tolerance. Second, pursuit of truth should be associated with pursuit of truthfulness of life; in other words, truthful life should be guided by pursuit of truth rather than by individual moral preferences. Third, a particular religious tradition, rather than a generic notion of religion, should be taken as the default position of religious education since it is the particular traditions that are the bearers of ultimate truth claims, which often contradict one another.

However, we should examine Wright's critical realist approach to religious education with regard to otherness, just as we have with the original Bhaskarian critical realism. In this thesis it has been argued that Bhaskarian critical realism is limited by its lacuna of the ontological realism of otherness in its characteristic agent-centred explanation of reality. With the recognition of this lacuna the thesis has explored the possibility of non-agential moment, which makes possible the ontology of otherness. In doing so, it has argued that ontological realism of otherness makes possible ethical turning for dialectical agency, which constitutes a double openness in understanding of human being. Moreover, if we accept the critical realist claim of stratification of reality, and accordingly seek to understand the deepest level of reality, often referred to in terms of ultimate truth as Wright points out, then, it has been argued, we would be faced with two contrasting understandings of ultimate reality between the non-personal account and the personal account of transcendence. While the former claims universality in spite of being itself a product of modernity, the latter does not fail to acknowledge its root in a particular tradition; while the former takes particularity as an ordinary (lower) level of truth in the name of a higher level of universal truth, but in doing so becomes unable to account for the ontological distinctiveness of otherness by reducing it to being secondary, the latter takes its stance in a particular religious tradition, which claims for God as *personal* in that the ontological dimension of otherness is acknowledged as constitutive of the very being of God. Personhood of God in the latter has been argued as making possible the double

openness of human being, and hence is understood as penetrating all process of the double openness. Otherness is what makes the crucial difference when it is recognised in critical realism. Therefore, if Wright's approach to religious education takes critical realism as a pivot, then it must face the issue of otherness.

As we have seen above, Wright's critical realist approach to religious education is not indifferent to the issue of otherness. Rather, the significance of otherness is implied to a certain degree in his critical religious education: first of all, in common with Bhaskarian critical realism, its pursuit of truth is based on the recognition of the ontological independence of ultimate reality from human knowledge. The acknowledgement of ontological independence is the starting point of the recognition of otherness. Though Bhaskar quickly moves on to the agential-centred explanation of the ontologically independent reality, it is the teaching of Levinas that the very first encounter with otherness is non-agential moment. In his reading of Levinas, Wright takes seriously what otherness or alterity can bring to the reified certainty without falling into antagonism, hence alterity is what can be celebrated, since it makes possible enhancement of or critique to existing knowledge of reality. Moreover, unlike Bhaskarian meta-Reality, which is unable to conceive the genuine sense of otherness by subordinating it as a particular claim, Wright's conception of discrete religious tradition as the default position paves a way for religious education to take otherness between religions seriously, and for a personal account of transcendence rooted in Christianity to be taken seriously in the public sphere of religious education.

The last point leads us to the final remark on the possibility of Christian religious education in Christian schools. *If we pursue ultimate truth and truthfulness in religious education on the ground of ontological realism as Wright argues, but at the same time we take seriously the difference that otherness makes in the understanding of transcendence, then such an approach of ontology and otherness requires religious education to take seriously the issue of personhood in its pursuit of ultimate truth of transcendence.* This is because critical realist ontology requires the rediscovery of

ontology of otherness, because otherness makes possible ethics and because the ultimate sense of otherness can only be possible by personal relation rather than by the necessity of non-personal principle. It is the very particular tradition of the Trinitarian account of personhood of God in Christianity that provides such a personal account of God. Moreover, the *ontology and otherness* approach requires religious education not only to be a form of learning about personhood of Christianity, but also to encourage pupils to live by it in the way of double openness (dialectical openness to the world and ethical openness to the other), in which hypostatical personal relation is understood as grounding all the process of openness. In doing so it is the nature of this approach to pursue truth and truthfulness in religious education under the light of the Christian account of the Trinitarian God. Comprehensive liberalists would critique this approach by raising the possibility of uncritical indoctrination or limiting pupils' autonomy by putting them into a particular religious ethos. However, in recent research Mark Pike shows some cases of Christian ethos schools committed to Christianity-based core values in their education, including religious education. He points out that pupils attending those denominational schools show not only the positive influence of Christianity upon their lives but also a deeper understanding of Christianity, engage in more free discussion and critique about Christianity and other religions, hence exercising their autonomy, and are more likely to feel good about themselves and life while less likely to hold liberal views on tobacco, sex, and alcohol than are those in non-denominational state schools (2011). What Pike suggests for us is not the necessity of Christian ethos schools, but the possibility of Christian ethos schools for their educational contributions for pupils. Christian religious education in Christian schools has often been undermined by the principle of comprehensive liberal education, but this has fostered among pupils a secular orthodoxy, while leaving out religion from their lives. This is itself a reification of ideology; it is a closed worldview. In this sense, Wright's emphasis on taking truth as a controversial issue in religious education is considered of utmost importance for its educational contribution, for regaining a genuine sense of critique by inviting pupils into informed dialogue with different truth claims. By taking ultimate truth claims as controversial, Wright's critical religious

education remains available for all types of schools, whether religiously founded or state maintained. In this sense, his approach can be said to take a moderate position in regard to ontology and otherness, since it does not take a fuller sense of otherness in religious education practice. However, if one takes the *ontology and otherness* approach in a fuller degree in religious education then it should seriously engage with the personal account of God, like the Trinitarian account of personhood of God. In this regard, Christian tradition lived and pursued in Christian schools can be said as the particular religious tradition that can provide the Trinitarian account better than any other religious tradition, hence Christian schools are the better place for doing religious education from the theoretical ground of Ontology and Otherness.

Conclusion

Ontology and Otherness and Possibility of Christianity in Religious Education in Christian Schools

The thesis has been a critically progressive exploration of a theoretical ground of the possibility of Christian religious education in Christian schools in Korea. Having concerned with the reality of Religion in Korea, the thesis presented in Introduction the problem of ambiguity of *Religion*, the current form of school religious education in the country, and presented the aim of the thesis as such; *'to explore a theoretical ground for religious education for the actual site of religious education, particularly for the major part of religious schools, viz. Christian schools'*. It is because the reality of *Religion*: religious schools are the place where *Religion* has been *actually* existed; it has been so from the very beginning of the modern school system in Korea. But, more noticeably, *Religion* has existed almost exclusively in religious schools even after the inclusion of *Religion* into the national curriculum in 1981 and after the introduction of the statutory syllabus under the double-selective regulation. However, the current curriculum of *Religion* has not recognized sufficiently the reality; instead it has imposed a compromised syllabus upon the actual site with the result of practical ambiguity. Thus the thesis aims to pave a way for the possibility of Religion for the actual in a way that overcome s the problem.

For the sake of Conclusion of the thesis, it is worthwhile to re-present the problem in details as below so that the thesis concludes its study by stating the relevance of the explored theoretical ground to the problems.

Problems of the current curriculum of *Religion* in regard to Christian schools in Korea

Practical ambiguity is structured into the actual site of *Religion* in the form of statutory syllabus

Contrary to the original intention of the elimination of the ambiguity that was conceived as being caused by the denominational approach, the result has been the embodiment of practical ambiguity in the structure of *Religion* in the compromised statutory model syllabus by which the actual practice of *Religion* among religious schools has become containing the two conflicting approaches into it: in the situation that no public school seems to take *Religion* in their curriculum, the religious schools, which have been *the actual site* of religious education in school system of Korea, are seriously restricted to the compromised statutory syllabus with the negative charge of denominationalism. As such, Christian religious education in Christian schools, which are the major part of religious schools, has been de-legitimated under the so-called inclusive, publicness-aimed religious education. This structurally embodied ambiguity could hardly be said to be an improvement on the previous situation. Rather it can be said that it has structured practical ambiguity into the actual site of religious education by setting up the subject in the compromised statutory syllabus.

Undermining the possibility of Christianity of Christian schools to contribute to publicness of education

As seen in the history of *Religion* in Introduction, there has been negative view on religious education in religious schools. For example, the subject was eliminated in the 3rd national curriculum because there were tensions and conflicts in regard to religion after the implementation of the Non-Examination Entrance to Middle School Act in 1967. When it was officially resumed since the 4th national curriculum, religious schools has often been charged with denominational teaching which is conceived as contrasting to publicness of education. However the negative charge of denominationalism has undermined the possibility of individual religion, particularly Christianity in Christian schools to be a good place for publicness of education.

According to Sebastian Kim Christian theology has always tried to be relevant to its context and society). Particularly in modern highly secularised and plural societies, it continues in the form of public theology that seek to engage in dialogue with those outside Christian circles on various issues. As such it encourages Christians to participate in the public domain. It seeks to converse with citizens on issues wider than religious matters. In doing so, he argues, contrary to the charge of denominationalism from those in the inclusive model of religious education, the strength of Christianity in any society has more to do with the integrity of the Christian Church by seeking the public good through the public significance of the Christian message. To this end, Christians would even risk their security out from their safe place. In this regard, Kim states clearly on the publicness of Christianity (Sebastian Kim 2011)

With the growth of civil society and the increase in secularism, there is both an invitation and also an urgent need for Christian theology to be actively engaged in conversation on public issues ... it can put forward moral, ethical, and spiritual insights that make a vital contribution to addressing problems and promotes the common good in modern societies. (Sebastian Kim 2011)

In recent research Mark Pike also shows cases of Christian ethos schools committed to Christianity-based core values in their education, including religious education. He points out that pupils attending those denominational schools show not only the positive influence of Christianity upon their lives but also a deeper understanding of Christianity, engage in more free discussion and critique about Christianity and other religions, hence exercising their autonomy, and are more likely to feel good about themselves and life while less likely to hold liberal views on tobacco, sex, and alcohol than are those in non-denominational state schools (Pike 2010a, 2010b). What Pike suggests for us is not the necessity of Christian ethos schools, but the possibility of Christian ethos schools for publicness of educational contributions for pupils.

Christianity as a particular religious tradition can participate in the public sphere with its contribution. In the same way, as Mike's research has shown, Christian religious education in Christian school can make contribution to publicness of education without losing the Christian core value in their religious education. This may also be applicable to other discrete religions. Thus, if religious schools conceived are as part of the public sphere, then it is worthwhile to encourage the religious schools, the actual site of *Religion*, to pursue publicness of religious education not simply no-where but from their religious tradition by pursuing truth of their religious tradition in a critical manner. However, the current curriculum of *Religion* reflects the negative charge upon religious schools so that it places individual religious tradition in a separate section in order to be taught after the general approach to religion rather than recognizing the pivotal role of particular religion to lead the whole process of religious education. This is the result of the negative charge of denominationalism and of the undermining possibility of particular religion for publicness of education.

The liberal inclusive model of *Religion* as limiting Christian schools to develop their own religious education curriculum

There is another crucial problem that the statutory syllabus and the implied purpose of publicness of *Religion* have brought upon the actual site of *Religion*: the liberal inclusive model of religious education.

As seen Introduction, those who claim for publicness of *Religion* have shown their inclination to liberal inclusive model of religious education. At the same time they have charged the religious schools with denominational religious education which is conceived as partial and exclusive, hence non-publicness. Particularly, Yoon, Chung and Kim who have been influential in the formation of the current curriculum of *Religion* take phenomenological approach as the way to achieve the aim of publicness of *Religion* implied in the statutory syllabus.

However, there is an important critique to the inclusive religious education to be noted. According to Wright, religious education developed from phenomenological approach to religion has advocated inclusive model of religious education, which implies the generic notion of religion (Wright 2007). When conceiving religious phenomena with the generic quality, religious education is regarded as “inclusive” of any religions for any pupils regardless to their religious or non-religious background. In doing so it ‘encourages pupils to develop their own personal and idiosyncratic visions of ultimate reality’ (Wright 2000, p.77). The inclusive approach and the generic notion of religion have been likely a form of liberal education where two principles of freedom and tolerance work as for encouraging pupils to construct their meaning of life out of the personal and idiosyncratic visions of ultimate reality (Wright 2000, 2007). For Wright, the inclusive approach is seriously flawed. He points that the inclusive model of religious education is constituted by a closed and reified worldview. He argues that the inclusive religious education postulated in terms of social harmony on the basis of individual freedom seems to reflect a comprehensive liberalist vision of society, in which two principles, freedom and tolerance, are reified as having intrinsic value rather than being used as an ethical interim for continual emancipation by searching for truth. Without pursuit of truth the liberal inclusive education and its favoured phenomenological approach more likely entail dissociation of truth from truthfulness. Moreover, such generic notion of religion and its related inclusive model of religious education entail dissociation of truth and truthfulness which is deeply related with epistemic fallacy: to reduce being to knowledge of being. Unlike to this, he argues that religious education should foster truthful life but at the same time it cannot be dissociated from pursuit of truth of reality. It is because that truth cannot be simply gained by individual imaginary meaning construction advocated in inclusive approach but it can be pursued only from a particular social position to which individual belong, like a religious tradition. This is why Wright takes a particular religious tradition as the default position of religious education for the pursuit of truth and truthfulness (2007)

However, in the Korean context, through both setting *Religion* in the mono form of the statutory syllabus and directing it into the particularly conceived aim of publicness, while being inclined to liberal inclusive education, it has become the case for Christian schools that they are limited in developing their own religious education curriculum, otherwise, could lead them to positively response to publicness of education from their particular religious tradition.

The critically progressive exploration - Ontology and Otherness

Concerned with the problems of the context, the thesis took Wright's critical religious education as the stepping stone in a critical manner in order to overcome the problems and at the same time to provide a theoretical ground for the possibility of Christian religious education in Christian schools. However, with notice of a crucial problem of critical realist ontology, the thesis begins its critically progressive exploration from immanent critique of the ontology toward the theory of Ontology and Otherness.

Ontology

Firstly, the thesis focused on transcendental realism as the key idea of critical realism that penetrates all stages of critical realism. The thesis identified transcendental realism as a special form of explanation, pointing out a characteristic feature of it in terms of its explanatory stance, viz. 'agential-centredness of being': the intrinsic tendencies of a thing are qualified as transfactual so that they are regarded as the agential causal powers of that thing: transcendental realism re-vindicates ontology in terms of the intrinsic tendencies of being, taken as the explanatory stance from which that being and its relations with the circumstances are explained. More specifically, transcendental realism as a form of causal explanation was defined by its explanatory stance: it is the agential intrinsic tendencies *of* a being; that is, it explains a being fundamentally from the agential causal powers of that being. Therefore, the thesis designated the term *agential-centred* explanation to describe the characteristic feature of transcendental realism, because *agential*

highlights the key point of the argument that transcendental realism as a causal explanation finds the causal powers primarily from inside a being and its relationality, rather than from something outside of a being. However, this raised the question of the non-agential moment, which in turn gives rise to another question of exteriority or the other.

Dialectically ethical agency

The thesis moved on to explore the question of whether the agential-centred explanation of reality is persistent in Bhaskar's explanation of social reality, particularly his explanation of the human being. The ontology of the human agent, seen in *Possibility of Naturalism*, has the same pattern of characteristic features as that of natural things, and has pointed out that this gives rise to the question of the non-agential moment. Our reading of *Dialectics* also showed that Bhaskar deepens the critical naturalist account of human agency by establishing the human agent as ethical agent in the dialectically changing world of reality through an ontological-axiological chain in which absence and alethia come to take a pivotal role. Thus, Bhaskar's *Dialectics* was shown as an agential-centred explanation particularly in the sense that the pivotal concepts of absence and alethia should be seen as what make the dialectical movement of reality agential movement. Both concepts are essentially connected with agency.

Having explored critically Bhaskar's critical realism up to his theory of *Dialectics*, the thesis took a further step to answer the questions of the non-agential moment and otherness of the other, which were raised by the reading of Bhaskarian ontology. The thesis attempted to present Levinas's philosophy as providing an answer to them and then presented a critical dialogue between the two philosophies in terms of their compatibility and difference in order to identify a point of integration between them. As for the compatibility between them, firstly, the Levinasian account was understood in terms of the Bhaskarian holy trinity of critical realism. The second compatible point between them was found in their structural understanding of ethical rationality: ethical rationality was understood in terms of processuality; it is not static but is in continual

dialectical construction; and at the outset of the process, the structural understanding of ethical rationality in both accounts recognises the importance of the (concrete) singularity of the agency as the starting site of the ethics, considering ethics as dependent upon the agency because, once ethical rationality is set on the ground of the singularity,¹⁹⁹ it was understood that the ethical agent will seek and conduct absencing absence in its multi-level relation.

Ontology and Otherness

The thesis also expounded a radical, perhaps ultimate, difference between two philosophies which generates some other significant differences, including the difference in stance between agential centredness and the non-agential moment. The radical difference is related to the understating of the initial setting of the agent on the ethical ground. For Bhaskar, we saw the dialectical logic of ethical rationality from freedom to solidarity; the latter would be the proper case of ethics while the former is focused on freedom. What we can see is an extensional structure from the desire for my freedom to the desire for the other's freedom; the latter is entrained by the former. By putting together the idea of alethia with the dialectical logic, it was said that the human agent for Bhaskar is implicitly ethical from eternity in the way that it is somehow guided by the alethia in its actual course of life to pursue freedom for oneself first then gradually for the other. According to Levinas, however, ethics was shown not to be generated from freedom; rather freedom is conceived as making ethics an option or opinion; freedom as entailing a greater likelihood of the exercise of power in the form of possession and mastery (that is interested in its own conatus alive) than does ethics.

An explanatory example of Levinasian ethics was given in regard to the non-agential moment: absencing hunger of the other is ethical and is only possible because the face of the other commands me. It is not a rational understanding, but is pre-cognitive affection upon me. The initial

¹⁹⁹ The account of the initial setting of the agent on the ethical ground is the point of greatest divergence between Bhaskar and Levinas. This point will be dealt with later, but for the time being what is concerned is the process after the initial setting.

setting of the I on the ethical ground is not the work of the agential movement or choice; rather it is by calling of the other, by being exposed to the other. Thus it is not the agential movement but the non-agential moment. Even the implicit alethia in me cannot replace the significance that the other brings to me. It is not a kind of Platonic reminiscence of what is already in me. It is not drawing out from inside, but is rather sensuous affection on me from exteriority, viz. the other whose invocation puts my freedom into question. Ethics for Levinas is a breach of freedom: by being commanded my will for myself is persecuted; I become a hostage for the other; I have subjectivity in the sense that I am subject to the other. Therefore, the relationship with the other in ethics was explained as asymmetrical.

Double Openness

Most importantly, by putting together Bhaskar's dialectically ethical agent and Levinas' ethical subjectivity, the thesis articulated a form of integration between them, called *double openness*. Bhaskarian agent was explained with only one kind of openness: dialectical openness, which is natural: Bhaskar defines the human agent as an open totality on the ground of human being's dialectical nature, of which a short definition could be *process-in-product* and *product-in-process*. So it is the dialectical nature that makes possible the dialectical openness in that ethics, understood as a characteristic agential movement, is incorporated through transformative negation. However, Levinasian subjectivity was explained as consisting of two kinds of openness: *a priori* openness to the other (ethical), that sustains and pulses the dialectical openness to be a special case (ethical): the first and prior openness indicates the exposure to the other, while the second refers to the dialectical openness of the agent radically transformed by the first openness. Thus the double openness articulates a point of integration between them in terms of ethical subjectivity, which may fill the lacuna in Bhaskarian ontology while putting Levinasian otherness on a critical realist ground. The ethical subjectivity is an openness prior to openness: the first openness is the subjection (exposedness) to the other, which is followed by the second openness that is devotion to Being,

which is agential involvement of Being. The second openness *presupposes* ethics, the first teaching from the other, though it is also true that the first teaching may have become a meaningful pulse of the ethically assigned intentional consciousness of the subject.

A critique of meta-Reality

On the basis of the theory of *Ontology and Otherness* the thesis examined two contrasting account of transcendence: Bhaskar's meta-Reality and a classical Trinitarian account of God. Wright shows that both accounts are ontologically exclusivist, epistemically exclusivist and soteriologically inclusivist (2012, pp.90ff). At this juncture, the thesis expounded the point that what makes them different from each other, even contrasting each other in regard to the ultimate reality, is *Otherness*. As seen earlier, for Bhaskar, the primary mode of being is 'implicit'. This crucial feature was attributed to the penetrating explanatory form of agential centredness in that the central role of the agency is defined with the transformative praxis in forms of negation (shedding) and realisation. The logical structure is that Bhaskarian critical realism, from the first to the last, is based on and dependent on the crucial aspect of his ontology that defines the primary mode of being as 'implicit' as tendencies (necessities), which entrain the necessity of the transformative agency whose action is characteristically transformative negation for awakening: awakening here is a connotative concept which implies both the presupposition of what is to be awakened within the self and the ways of awakening, such as shedding, filling and realising. What is stressed in both is that the *self-transformation* in that agency is not only the locus of change but is itself autonomous and deterministic for its realisation. Awakening therefore is about self-transformative efforts within the stratified self, in that any notion of heteronomously given salvation is fundamentally unacceptable, hence incommensurable. Moreover, Wright considers this point as a specific ontological assumption of human being as ultimately good and autonomous. But he points out that this assumption as a production of modernity is highly questionable and indeterminate (Wright 2012, pp.98f): it is rooted in the notion of perennial wisdom which emerged in nineteenth century Romanticism and is

comfortable to a democratic liberal economy in the guise of the claim that ‘human beings are free and equal, then they must have free and equal access to spiritual truth’ (Wright 2012, pp.22f).

Here one can see the highly compatibility between the liberal inclusive education and Bhaskarian agential-centred understanding God. Though the liberal inclusive model may say of publicness of religious education in terms of freedom and autonomy of human being as similarly seen in the discourse of publicness of Religion in Korea, it is seriously lack of the sense of otherness, remained at the level of the second openness of the double openness.

Trinitarian God and Personhood as the better explanation of Otherness

Contrary to meta-Reality where all things are explained in terms of being implicit so that nothing cannot ultimately be astonishing, the thesis focused on Trinitarian understanding of transcendence in that one can capture the overflowing nature of encounter with infinity (in Levinasian sense), like the engagement with the face of the other; filling the self with what cannot be drawn from within the self and overflowing with more than the self can contain, so that it becomes desire, inspired from the other than the self and inspiring the self-dialectical process. McGrath explained this in terms of the iterative procedure that is to infer to the better explanation of the given situation. This procedure points the necessity of “seeing” from a particular position while using the abductive reasoning, by which one can explain an unexpected or astonishing phenomenon by reasoning a bigger or better picture (explanation).

According to this procedure, Trinitarian account of transcendence is better and correct explanation in regard to Otherness. Moreover, it is the personhood of Trinitarian God, particularly the Father who let the others be and, as Zizioulas pointed out, of whom otherness is a constitutive part; who love in freedom, not from necessity: this can be explained by His “personhood” rather than any qualities, like Bhaskar’s alethia, he has. While the notion of alethia of Bhaskar denote

qualities of the Self, from which all things come out and implicit in it so that there cannot be genuine sense of otherness, the notion of personhood of Trinitarian God can explain the genuine sense of otherness, hence the latter is a better explanation of otherness.

A model of stratification of human being and the importance of a particular place

If we have been informed by Bhaskar with a limited sense of love, simply speaking, as a binding force of the self, hence constituting ethical dialectical agency, and if Levinas has taught us the inevitability of otherness and my ethical response to the other, hence constituting ethical subjectivity, it is the Trinitarian theology, particularly that of Zizioulas, that lets us know who we are, not in the sense of qualities we 'have' but more fundamentally in the sense of who we 'are'; that is, we are person, 'being loved then loving' after the model of the Trinity.

However, there seems to be a structure between them. If one stays in the position of Bhaskarian dialectical agency she would not be able to "see" the other as the ethical subjectivity of Levinas sees so that she can only have a life of dialectical openness in that her freedom is always prior to the other. Likewise, if one is stuck on the level of Levinasian ethical subjectivity then she can "see" her subjectivity as a quality she "has" rather than she is; it is a limited vision of one person. However, if one "sees" herself in the Zizioulas's level of personhood then her vision of life reaches to the point that she as a person is *being* other of someone and is loved and loving as a person; that is the essential meaning of being person. Finally, such personhood is not self-generated, but is a gift from the divine person by his hypostatic relation to us.

Following the structure a model of ontological stratification of human being was suggested as below,

(Bhaskarian) Dialectical agency, as incorporated into

(Levinasian) Ethical subjectivity, as originating from

(Zizioulas) Personhood generated by

(Trinitarian) The hypostatic relation with the persons of the Trinity

It should be noted that each of them are provide for us “a bigger picture” for the explanation of human being and its relation with the world. However not all of them has the same capacity to grasp the whole reality. As McGrath pointed out one can take a particular stance to “see” the world; likewise, Wright emphasised the importance of taking a particular religious tradition for the pursuit of truth which may entails truthful life to the degree that the sense of truth provides. For example, remaining at Bhaskarian level, life can be true to the degree that it awakens what is true for the self through transcendental identification, including transformative negation; at the level of Levinasian ethical subjectivity, life may be true to the degree that it desires beyond itself and becomes responsible for the other according to the ethical truth, provoked by encountering the other then inscribed in consciousness; at the level of personhood, openness is conceived not as a quality we have, but as a constitutive part of a person, because being a person means being in the hypostatic relation, in that a person is *being other* of someone else in the mode of beloved and loving, in which ethical relation is already implied. Life in the level of personhood is, therefore, ontologically truthful since by becoming a person we are hypostatically realised truth or a new birth in truth, but still in need of becoming more fully person, not only by transformative dialectical negation but fundamentally in faithful relation with the persons of the Trinity.

The need of critical judgement for a better place and the possibility of Christian religious education

What is needed is a critical judgement between levels, particularly in regard to our concern of the Koran context. If Bhaskarian level of dialectical agency is compatible with the model of liberal inclusive religious education as Wright pointed out (Wright 2012), then it can be said that such inclusive model of religious education limits Christian schools and its Christian religious education to the degree of the first openness that encourages freedom of

oneself prior to the other, which in turn leads to the betrayal of the very teaching of Christianity.

The problem of practical ambiguity that the Christian schools have can be seen in this regard. The ambiguity is not simply a matter of choice. It is a matter of truth and truthfulness to Christian schools. By posing comprehensive liberal principle, freedom and tolerance, the liberal inclusive model curriculum of Religion has been oppressed Christian schools in a way that limits them in pursuing truth to them hence makes them remained being less truthful. At the heart of the ambiguity, therefore, there is matter of truth and truthfulness for Christian schools.

However, if Christian schools are provided with possibility to develop their curriculum of *Religion* according to their vision of Christianity, like that of Trinitarian personhood, the quality of publicness of the curriculum of *Religion* cannot be dismissed as simply denominational. Rather, according to the model of stratification of human being, Christian religions education pursued from the particular Christian tradition can be deeply influential for social integration in terms of being for other and being person for other, that is, to love in freedom. Moreover, with its provision of publicness of *Religion* gained from the Trinitarian personhood, the curriculum religious education developed for Christian schools can be a critical learning place whereby those different truth claims of other levels come to be examined. Furthermore, by using of those levels of the stratification of human being as organising principle of the curriculum of *Religion*, Christian schools can have a more robust curriculum of *Religion* than the current form of *Religion* in the sense that it can deals with holistic reality of the world from the principle of Ontology and Otherness.

Therefore, the thesis concludes with the suggestion that Christian religious education for Christian schools in Korea is not only possible but it should be pursued on the theoretical ground of Ontology and Otherness.

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Appendix

<Table 1> the number of religious schools that chosen *Religion* in their school curriculum in 2004 (Byoung-chul Ko 2005, p. 112)

Religious schools	Number of schools	No. of schools with <i>Religion</i>	No. of schools abiding by the double-selective regulation of <i>Religion</i>
Christianity	162	82	61
Catholic	38	9	9
Buddhism	12	9	9
(Moon's) Unification Church	3	3	2
The Seventh-Day Adventist Church	8	8	5
Others	13	3	2
Total	236	114	88

<Table 2> the statutory model syllabus of *Religion* for the 7th National Curriculum (2002-2007) (Chin-hong Chung 2001, p. 30)

Themes	Contents to be learnt
I. Human and Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ultimate questions and ultimate problems ● Engagement with religion and solutions of problems ● Knowing and Believing ● Meanings and functions of religion
II. Understanding of Religious Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various problems of life ● Perspectives of cosmology, history and life and death ● Sacred books and religious norms ● Religious rituals and religious practices
III. Different Religious Traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Religious thoughts and their background ● True thing and realization ● Understanding of character of religion
IV. Religions and Cultures of the World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confucianism and Taoism ● Buddhism ● Christianity ● Islam and others
V. Religious Understanding of Human Being and Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various perspectives of human being ● Religious perspectives of human being ● Religious perspective of nature ● Science and religion
VI. Religions and Cultures of Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Korean Buddhism and its culture ● Korean Confucianism and Taoism and their culture ● Korean Christianity and its culture ● Korean shamanist faith and national religions
VII. Religious Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ideologies and structure of community ● Social functions of religion ● Reconciliation and co-existence between religions ● Religious formation of personality

VIII. Traditions and Thoughts of a Particular Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The sacred book, doctrines and the history ● Religious life ● Korean religion and creation of culture ● Drawing of my religious life
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<Table 3> comparison of the statutory syllabus with the actual textbooks of *Religion* (Kim, Gui-sung, 2006, p.128; the table below has been modified by adding the last column)

Textbook The Statutory Syllabus	Religion Buddhism(2002) : single volume	Religion Catholic(2002) : single volume	Religion (Christianity)		No actual textbooks provided for non- religious or public schools
			* PCK (2002) Three volume for each year (1)-(3)	**KFCS (2002) Three volume for year (1)- (3)	
I. Human and Religion	Human life and religion	In search of Identity (Internet, Sex, Drug addictions, Outward Appearance)	Human and Religion (1)	Human and religion (1)	
II. Understanding of Religious Experience			Understanding of religious experience (1)		
III. Different Religious Traditions	World religions	Neighbour religions (Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam and Korean religions)	Different religious traditions (1)		
IV. Religions and Cultures of the World	Thoughts and characters of world religions		Religions and cultures of the world (2)	Traditions of religions of the world (1)	
V. Religious Understanding of Human Being and Nature	Human, nature and religion		Religious understanding of human being and nature (3)		
VI. Religions and Cultures of Korea	Religions and cultures of our nation		Korean Religions and Cultures (2), Life of Korean and religion (2)	Korean religions, Religions brought in Korea	
VII. Religious Communities	Contemporary society and		Religions communities,	Contemporary society and	

	roles of religion		Life and practice of religious person (2)	religion (3)	
VIII. Traditions and Thoughts of a Particular Religion	Beginning of Buddhism, World of Enlightenment, Truth of Mahayana Buddhism, Buddhist ethics, Korean Buddhism, Arts and Buddhism Buddhist practice Buddhist creation of a new culture (135 pages/49%)	- The one who loves us - Our choice - In search of happiness (105 pages/57%)	Church and eschatology (1), Christianity and personality (1), Covenant and prophecy (2), Church and mission (2), God and human (3), Christy and Holy Spirit (3) (Total 193 pages of three volumes/40%)	The Bible of Christianity (1), Works of God in the New Testament (1), Works of God in the Old Testament (2), Teachings of Christ (2), History of Church (3), Life of Christian (3) Future of Christian (3) (Total 207 pages of three volumes/53%)	
Total	278 pages	183 pages	486 pages	392 pages	

* PCK is the abbreviation of Presbyterian Church of Korea. ** KFCS is the abbreviation of Korea Federation of Christian School.